

THE BRITISH COLONIAL MAGAZINE.

Conducted by W. H. SMITH, Author of the "Canadian Gazetteer," &c. &c.

NUMBER XXII.

PRICE 3d.; or 12s. 6d. per Annum.

LIFE ASSURANCE.

Although there are about sixty Life Assurance Companies and Societies in the kingdom, all of which are constantly making strenuous efforts to attract public attention to the peculiar advantages which they have to offer, it is a fact not less true than surprising, that the number of individuals who have availed themselves of life assurance in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is not much above eighty thousand. Allowing twenty-five millions to be the population of the empire, and five persons to be the number of each family, it would thus appear that not more than one head of a family out of sixty-two has adopted this means of providing for the helpless beings whom he may leave behind him. If there were other means in abundance of providing for widows and fatherless children, we might be little surprised at this calculation; but when we consider that the case is quite the reverse—that few fathers have property wherewith to provide for a surviving family, that the number connected with the institutions which allow pensions to widows is necessarily small—when we consider, in short, that the great majority of men who have wives and children have nothing but an income depending on their own life and exertions between their families and want—we cannot but conclude that the expedient of life assurance is either unknown to a large portion of society, or knowingly neglected by them. In either case, a short paper explaining the subject, and enforcing its claims on the attention of husbands and fathers, may be expected to prove in some degree useful.

Life assurance was not practised in this country till the reign of Queen Anne, when "The Amicable Society" was established in London. At that period no inquiries had been made to ascertain the probable duration of life after any specified age: there was a general notion that life was uncertain at all ages; and, accordingly, for the first fifty years of life assurance the charges for insuring a certain sum were the same from all persons under forty-five! In time, however, it became known that a person at, we shall say, thirty, has a chance of living a longer time than a person at forty, and so on; and the consequence was, that, in 1762, "The Equitable Society" of London was established, on the principle of making charges in proportion to the various

ages of the parties. Since then, calculations as to the probable duration of life after any certain age have been made with more nicety, so that life assurances are now, and have long been, transacted on principles of exact justice to individuals, with respect to their ages.

Down to a comparatively recent period, life assurance was chiefly conducted on the ordinary principles of a mercantile speculation. A company, possessing a large capital, assured sums payable on the deaths of parties, at certain rates, calculating on a profit from their transactions. The sole advantage of this plan lay in the guarantee afforded by the capital of the company. It has been found that, by the plan of mutual assurance, all desirable security is afforded, while the profits are divisible among the only parties who have any right to them, the assurers. Mutual Assurance Societies are therefore rapidly supplanting Assurance Companies, most of which will probably in a few years cease to exist. In the present paper, we propose to confine our attention to the plan of mutual assurance.

Mutual assurance proceeds on the following simple principles. While it is an indubitable fact that nothing is more precarious than the life of an individual, seeing that a thousand dangers constantly beset him, it is an equally certain fact that, if we take so large a number as ten thousand persons, or even a smaller number, it is possible to say with almost unerring certainty how many of these will die during the next ensuing year, how many in the next, and so on, until, at about the age of 100, not one person remains. Thus Dr. Price, of Northampton, took 11,650 individuals, whose births and deaths were recorded in the proper books at that town, and found that in the first year 3000 died, in the second 1367, in the third 502, in the fourth 335, in the fifth 197, and so on, till the last man died at 96. Dr. Price consequently assumed that, of any 11,650 individuals who existed in the like circumstances, 3000 would die in the first year, 1367 in the second, and so on. It will be observed that the whole number who die in the first five years is 5401, leaving 6249 then alive: consequently, any one of the 11,650 children, at the moment of birth had a chance of living five years, equal to the proportion which 6249 bears to 5401, or somewhat more than a half. No man could say, at the moment, that any one of these ha-

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bies would continue alive for three seconds; but yet it was possible to say with some degree of probability that, in the proper circumstances, 6249 of the whole number would live to the commencement of the sixth year. When we go on to an age at which life assurance is more likely to be effected—say 52—we find that, of 100,000 persons who complete this portion of existence, 3044 will die before the end of the ensuing twelvemonth, so that each man's chance of dying in that space of time is in the proportion of 3044 to 100,000, or about 3 to 100. Now, supposing that these 100,000 persons were each desirous of insuring the payment of £100 to his heirs in the event of his dying during this year, it is evident that if they deposit a sum equal to 3044 times £100, that is £304,400, or about £3 Os. 10½d. each, they will form a fund sufficient for this purpose, leaving nothing over. We have only to suppose a set of persons of different ages depositing each the sum appropriate to his age, and continuing to do so as long as he lives, and we then have the idea of a Mutual Assurance Society in all except this—that, generally, instead of paying an increasing sum each year, proportioned to the increased risk, it is common to strike a medium in the probable future payments, and pay that from the beginning. Thus, in point of fact, the sum usually required for the assurance of £100 at death, from individuals aged fifty-two, is nearly five pounds.

While Mutual Assurance Societies are founded upon this basis, they take, from circumstances, another character in addition to that which they hold out to the public. It may readily be conceived that the calculations of the probable duration of lives are liable to be modified by certain contingencies. From climate, and modes of living, there is more health and better expectation of life in some countries than in others. Even in the same country, from improvements of various kinds, the ratio of deaths to the amount of the living inhabitants may be experiencing diminution, so that a man of thirty has the chance of living several years longer than his grandfather had at the same age. In this country, the annual mortality is considerably less in proportion than it was sixty years ago. Consequently, the calculations of Dr. Price, forming what are called the Northampton Tables, and which are above adverted to, although they were formed amongst a comparatively healthy rural population, are no longer strictly true. They calculate the chance of life at each particular age too low, and dictate the taking of a too high premium for assurance: in other words, a man at 52 has not in reality a chance of death in the next year equal to the proportion of 3044 to 100,000, but something less, and he should therefore pay less than £3 Os. 10½d. to assure £100 for a year. Nevertheless, the most of Mutual Assurance Societies, such as the Equitable of London, and the Scottish Widows' Fund and Scottish Equitable in Edinburgh, proceed upon the Northampton calculation—but for a reason which must be generally ap-

proved of. By this plan a considerable surplus takes place, which, at certain intervals, is reckoned, divided, and added to the standing policies, or sums assured, in their respective proportions. It must be evident that this plan, while it adds to the security of the society, will be perfectly just to all parties, if the divisions of the surplus do not take place at such wide intervals as to leave many policies of short currency unbenefited. The society last mentioned appears to us to make this justice most certain, as it divides the surplus triennially, being the shortest interval in practice. Now, what is the general result of this adherence to a large calculation of mortality, but that Mutual Assurance Societies become also, as it were, banks for savings? The money deposited there is not, strictly speaking, parted with. It is put into a stock, where it is sure of being invested to the best advantage—presuming the managers to be honourable and expert men. If the individual die before his proper time, a much larger sum is drawn out by his representatives. If, on the contrary, he live beyond the average, and make payments beyond the amount of the sum originally assured, still, in the long-run, when he dies, his heirs get not alone that sum, but something more, in proportion to the excess of his payments and the profits made by the investment of the society's funds, lessened only by his contingent for the expenses of the society. In many cases, where a policy was of moderately long standing, it has been found that the sum originally assured has been doubled, or more than doubled, while the premium, or annual sum paid for assurance, had of course sustained no increase.

Such being the equitable and beneficial principles upon which Mutual Assurance Societies are established, it is clear that they present, to men in the enjoyment of income, but possessing little property, a most suitable and favourable means of providing in a greater or less measure for the endeared and helpless relatives who may survive them. That only about 80,000 persons in the United Kingdom should have taken advantage of life assurance, being but one in sixty-two of the supposed number of heads of families, surely affords a striking view of—shall we call it the improvidence of mankind, or shall we not rather designate it as their culpable selfishness? For what is the predicament of that man who, for the gratification of his affections, surrounds himself with a wife and children, and peaceably lives in the enjoyment of these precious blessings, with the knowledge that, ere three moments at any time shall have passed, the cessation of his existence may throw wife and children together into a state of destitution? When the case is fully reflected upon, it must certainly appear as one of extremely gross selfishness, notwithstanding that the world has not been accustomed to regard it in that light. If, indeed, it were utterly impossible to provide for a widow and orphans, no fault could fairly be found. And, no doubt, the little blame bestowed by the world on this account is owing to the fact, that, till a recent period, no means of providing for

these relatives existed. They were in those days invariably left to the mercy of the public. But that this occasioned many evils, we may be abundantly satisfied, from the earnestness with which the founders of Christianity press the duty of succouring the widow and fatherless—one of them representing religion as almost entirely consisting in that benevolent action alone. Assuredly, if there had not been much misery from this cause, there would have been no need for so much urgency on the subject. But if we only consider for a moment how mainly every one is engaged in providing for himself, we must be satisfied of the extreme precariousness of any provision which is expected to come from parties not responsible. It is therefore the duty of every man to provide, while he yet lives, for his own; we would say that it is not more his duty to provide for their daily bread during his life than it is to provide, as far as he can, against their being left penniless in the event of his death. Indeed, between these two duties there is no essential distinction, for life assurance makes the one as much a matter of current expenditure as the other. One part of his income can now be devoted by a head of a family to the necessities of the present; another may be stored up, by means of life assurance, to provide against the future. And thus he may be said to do the whole of his duty towards his family, instead of, as is generally the case, only doing the half of it.

It may be felt by many, that, admitting this duty in full, income is nevertheless insufficient to enable them to spare even the small sum necessary as an annual premium for life assurance. The necessities of the present are in their case so great, that they do not see how they can afford it. We believe there can be no obstacle which is apt to appear more real than this, where an income is at all limited; and yet it is easy to shew that no obstacle could be more ideal. It will readily be acknowledged by every body who has an income at all, that there must be some who have smaller incomes. Say, for instance, that any man has £400 per annum: he cannot doubt that there are some who have only £350. Now, if these persons live on £350, why may not he do so too, sparing the odd £50 as a deposit for life assurance? In like manner, he who has £200 may live as men do who have only £175, and devote the remaining £25 to have a sum assured upon his life. And so on. It may require an effort to accomplish this; but is not the object worthy of an effort? And can any man be held as honest, or any way good, who will not make such an effort, rather than be always liable to the risk of leaving in beggary the beings whom he most cherishes on earth, and for whose support he alone is responsible? It may perhaps be thought that we feel strongly on this subject; we own that we do: but if the generality of men saw the case in its true light, they would feel as strongly as we do. They are only comparatively indifferent, because there has as yet been but a brief experience of a system for redeeming widows and orphans

from poverty. When life assurance is as universally understood and practised as it ought to be, he who has not made such a provision, or something equivalent, for the possibility of death, will, we verily trust, be looked on as a not less detestable monster than he who will not work for his children's bread; and his memory after death will be held in not less contempt.—*Chambers' Journal*, 1839.

THE MARRYING MAN.

Mr. Burrige was a marrying man, but this important fact was unknown both to the world and to himself. Having lived to the age of fifty in straitened circumstances, he had formed a thousand economical bachelor views and habits, and had contracted a horror of all extravagancies; among which he had long reckoned a wife as the most ruinous.

He would as soon have thought of keeping hunters on his two hundred a year, as of keeping a wife upon it. His circumstances suddenly changed; but the views and habits of a bachelor of fifty must change very gradually, if they change at all.

We have not thought him fit company for our reader until he had been for a year or two in possession of a handsome fortune, left him by a distant relative, who had never seen him: but wealth is a passport everywhere; and therefore we venture to introduce him now, after the first awkward sense of his increased importance has worn off.

He always thought it a very strange thing that a fortune should have been left him by a person who had never seen him. It would have been still more strange if it had been left him by one who had, for in truth he was not prepossessing.

Mr. Burrige was immensely tall, high-shouldered, and raw-boned. His head had once been covered with red hair; now it boasted a sandy wig. He had a slight tendency to a squint, and a hump; but this he never for a moment suspected, (he was of a very unsuspecting temper) priding himself particularly on his eyes and his figure, and frequently regretting that approaching age, which he chose to call "short-sightedness," obliged him to wear spectacles.

Certainly his eyes were bright—a bright green—but green is not a disagreeable colour, else nature would not be so lavish with it; and sometimes a ray of kindness would kindle, or a tear of feeling glisten in Burrige's green eyes, lending them a charm beyond that of the brightest blue or most sparkling black, if they only shone with pride and self-complacency. Well,—such as he was, he had one ardent admirer who thought his person all perfection—that one was himself.

It was a very original idea; and if such a one does sometimes strike great minds, we have generally remarked that those minds belong to the ugliest people.

Mr. Burrige was of a good family, and he had several valuable connexions. He had a

cousin in the ministry; one nephew an eminent banker; and one a reviewer; yet until this sudden change in his fortune he had lived in great seclusion.

He thought it a curious coincidence that, a short time after this accession, and just when he no longer needed it, his cousin, the minister, should present him with a very handsome sinecure. Some spiteful people thought that the minister, being a married man with a large family, and having no idea that Mr. Burrigge was a marrying man likely to have another, presented him with the sinecure in the hopes that he would live solely upon it, and in gratitude bequeath his fortune, rather increased than diminished, to him and his. People have such absurd ideas!

However, neither sinecure nor inheritance made any difference in Burrigge's style of living. In his poverty he had made very few acquaintances; therefore, the change in his circumstances was little known, considering how rapid, in general, is the diffusion of such useful knowledge, and the few who did know it were very anxious to keep it to themselves; thinking, perhaps, that every new discoverer of Burrigge's wealth would become an additional claimant for his favour, and a manoeuvrer for a place in his will; where they agreed, in the old adage, "the fewer the better cheer."

However, if Burrigge did not think much about marriage, he thought still less about death; as to his will, the idea of making one had never once crossed his mind; while now and then, when he had taken an extra glass of wine, or when he had found no buttons on his shirts and flannel waistcoats, he had begun to calculate what that expensive, and, as he had hitherto thought, useless luxury, a wife, might cost him; at such moments the image of Jessica Thornton, a very pretty girl, the protegee niece of Sir William Vernon, one of Burrigge's few intimates, seemed to hover about the corners of his dingy London sitting-room, whose darkness was rendered visible by the light of one mould candle, its fellow having been snuffed out with unconscious, because habitual, economy.

Now, though Mr. Burrigge certainly admired women in general, and Jessica Thornton in particular, he was only just slowly becoming aware that he was a marrying man, and, lo! ere long, the truth burst upon him, that he was a very great catch: but we anticipate the world did not suspect the truth, because he remained in his obscure lodgings, employed an old Scotch tailor, called Macbotcher, who lived in York street, Strand, was very gruff and uncouth, and kept only one servant, a country lad, who had acted at once as butler, valet, nurse, and drudge. This boy, Tim, was the son of respectable parents: but from reading the Penny Magazine, and the Sunday Intelligence, was grown literary and ambitious. He had a great idea that all men were equal: but then he knew that every thing must have a beginning; and he thought and said, "that there was no place like "Lunnon" to make the fortune of a man of genius."

Burrigge, who having been in ill health, had been ordered by his physician to be well rubbed with horse-hair gloves every morning, happened one day in the country to see Tim rubbing down a colt. The zeal and energy of the lad struck him. He offered to take him into his service, and give him his board, livery, and five pounds a year. Tim, though the son of a small farmer, was dazzled by the thought of "Lunnon," teased his parents into consenting, and transferred his wonderful rubbing powers from the colt to Burrigge.

We have said that Burrigge's unostentatious and humble mode of life, his somewhat shabby dress, uncouth manners, and penurious habits, prevented the world from detecting in him the marrying man. The world is often so deceived: a bland, smiling, gallant favourite of the ladies, with a well-appointed town and country house, an equipage, a lady's horse, and a grand piano, is often a mere decoy—an *ignis fatuus*, leading beauty into the slough of Despond; he is too comfortable to feel the want of a wife; he knows he is all-important only as long as he is single, and holds out false hopes only to beguile the fair. The reputed marrying man, whether young, middle-aged, or old, is often, in his own cold, selfish heart, the confirmed bachelor. Sometimes the wealth is as unreal as the man, and the "excellent catch" is a mere fortune-hunter in disguise—but that is another case, and not exactly in point. All we wish to enforce is, that the genuine marrying man is often a surly, bearish, contradictory, parsimonious old fellow—ungallant, and apparently caring little for women,—living in no style,—therefore the better able to afford a wife.

And such persons, (alas, for these unhappy times!) often, when their circumstances are clearly ascertained, are joyfully accepted, not merely by interested parents, but interesting daughters. Mr. Burrigge was in his sitting-room, taking an economical bachelor's privilege of completing his toilet by his only fire—which fire, being habitually kept low, and only fed with cheap and therefore inferior coals, was little more than a small mass of black powder, with a wreath of green smoke struggling to rise—like timid Genius, in its first battle with Fate. The sun, which for a December sun was a very bright one, had helped at once to put out the fire, and to reconcile Mr. Burrigge to its extinction.

"Never mind the fire, Tim," he said, as Tim knelt down to blow it, and piled the shovel and tongs perpendicularly, as he said, to make it "draw," a common and often useless contrivance. "Never mind it; the sun warms the room sufficiently, and coals are very dear this winter. Besides, when I'm going out, I always like the fire to be going out too!"

"But, sur, you aint agoing out, surely, with that 'ere cold?"

"Why, yes, Tim, now you've rubbed me so thoroughly, I feel much better."

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the instruments of friction with awe, and trying them on his own hand.

"Put them away, Tim," said Burridge, "you'll wear them out!"

"Why, no, sir, I beant so rough as all that, neither; all men is hequals—and——"

"Hold your tongue—here, just arrange my hair."

Burridge could not bear to call it a wig, even to Tim; he was a man who liked to fancy himself a hero, even to his *valet de chambre*; and where is the hero would own to wearing a wig?

"There: how do you think I look now?"

"Beautiful, sur! I've rubbed you as smooth as glass—you don't look like the same!"

"Well, Tim, here, remove these books and papers—I can't settle to anything to-day: I think I shall go and call on the Vernons."

"Well, sur, if you'll folly my advice, you will."

"Did you ever see Miss Jessica Thornton, Tim?"

"Yes, sur, she gave me a shilling once."

"Very extravagant that," answered Burridge, shaking his head.

"She gave it me, sur, when I took that 'ere note from you, a hasking for the hophodilcock, when you had the rheumatis, and she asked all about it, and told me how to use it; and then she said, 'Good bye, Tim,' and she gave me a shilling."

"A! 'twas then she gave it him," muttered Burridge: "that makes a difference. Tim, should you like to have a mistress?"

"No, sur," said Tim, reddening with anger, "I values wartue and repitation as father done afore me; but I shouldn't object to a wife, if I could afford one."

"You mistake me," said Burridge, gravely, "I mean, should you like me to have a wife?—as I am your master, my wife would be your mistress."

Oh! what, a grand lady, sur! in course she would—I shouldn't object, sur, if she wor sootable."

"But don't you think, Tim, I'm too old to marry?"

"No, sur, but I thinks you're too old to be single."

"Bravo! Tim, a capital answer. I begin to think so too. Well, I'm going out. First, I shall go into the city, to buy some of those eight-pence-halfpenny gloves I've seen advertised:—the idea of paying half-a-crown for light kid gloves, that one can't wear a dozen times without the expense of having them cleaned, when one can get them for eight-pence-halfpenny, by just looking about one! And then I shall call on the Vernons. Now, Tim, be careful, and don't waste anything. Mr. Medler, over the way, tells me he sometimes sees a blazing fire in this room when I'm out, and that you seem to be sauntering about, looking out of the window, and doing nothing."

"It's nothing but his wiciousness, sur. I never has a good fire, but when I'm expecting you, and afeard you'll be cold. I'm above burning the coals up for myself; it's a wile invention; and I never looks out a window but

to see whether you're a coming, sur, and then, sure enough, I sees him; he does nothing but spy and tell tales. He's no gentleman, I'm sure."

"Yes, Tim, he is: so speak respectfully of him."

"Well, sur, and if he is, all men are hequals, according to nature and immutable justis, both he as wurks and he as sits at home hidle, a running of him down; and he 'ave wounded a hequal in a tender pint!"

"Keep such folly to yourself, Tim: I am going to the Vernons. That gruel was excellent—you can finish it—there is plenty left, with a piece of bread; it will do for your dinner; and mind you have my broth and boiled mutton, with the turnips well mashed, ready by five. There, do I look well in front, with this coat, Tim?"

"You looks most becoming, sur."

"And how do I look behind?"

"Better still, sur," said Tim, following to open the door; then returning, he stirred up the fire, and extravagantly put on two bundles of wood. "Better still," he muttered to himself, "at least to my taste: I'm glad enough to see your back for a time, master. Nice, indeed!" he said, tasting the wretched lukewarm remains of the gruel: "master and I is of werry different opinions on that pint. Yet he aint a bad master nuther; and I, being a good servant, desarves good fare!" So saying, Tim threw the gruel under the grate; retired to a sort of larder, returned with a gridiron and a large piece of the mutton originally destined for his master's dinner; he broiled it; then taking a key out of the pocket of the coat Burridge had just taken off, he opened a cellaret, and mixed himself a splendid tumbler of brandy and water; drew down the blinds, put his feet on the fender, warmed himself before the now excellent fire, and said, rubbing his hands with delight, "That's what I calls comfort—I only wishes Mrs. Flounce were here, on the other side, with just such another glass. How my arm do ache with rubbing master down! Come, it would be too bad to work like a 'oss, and then dine on water-gruel, and that with all the good out of the grits—master took care of that! Ah! these are the best renovators after all—they beats the 'patent 'oss 'air' ones all to nothing!"—*Theodore Hook*.

TO MAKE KITCHEN VEGETABLES TENDER.—When peas, French beans, &c. do not boil easily, it has usually been imputed to the coolness of the season, or to the rains. This popular notion is erroneous. The difficulty of boiling them soft arises from an excess of gypsum imbibed during their growth. To correct this, throw a small quantity of subcarbonate of soda into the pot along with the vegetables.

ANTIGONUS.—Being in his tent, heard two soldiers who were standing outside speak very disrespectfully of him. After he had listened some time, he opened the tent and said to them, "If you wish to speak thus of me, you might at least go a little aside."—*Sulzer*.

A FAMILY PARTY.

Gentle reader! we promised thee at the outset of our journey pleasant companions by the way, and as an earnest of that promise, we have introduced Benjamin Bosky and Uncle Tim. We would not bespeak the courtsey for others that are soon to follow. In passing happily through life, half the battle depends upon the persons with whom we may be associated. And shall we carry spleen to the closet?—grope for that daily plague in our books, when it elbows and stares us in the face at every turn? To chronicle the "Painful Peregrinations" of Uncle Timothy through this live-long day, would exhibit him, like "Patience," not sitting "on a monument, smiling at grief," but lolling on Mr. Bosky's britschka, laughing (in his sleeve!) at the strange peculiarities of the Muffs, and listening with mild endurance to the unaccountable antipathies of Mrs. Flumgarten. Now the Fubsys might be called, *par excellence* a prudent family.

And prudence is a nymph we much admire,
She loves to aid the hypocrite and liar,
Helping poor rascals through the mire,
Whom filth and infamy begrime:

She's one of gail's most useful drudges,
Her good advice she never grudges,
Gives parsons meekness, gravity to judges;
But frowns upon the man of rhyme!

Good store of prudence had the Fussy family. Their honest scruples always prevented them from burning their fingers. They were much too wise to walk into a well. They kept on the windy side of the law. They were vastly prone to measure other people's morality by the family bushel, and had exceedingly grand notions touching their self-importance; (little minds, like little men, cannot afford to stoop!) which those who have seen a cock on a dughill, or a crow in a gutter, may have some idea of.

Nothing pleased Mrs. Flumgarten. Mr. Bosky's equipage she politely brought into depreciating comparison with the staring yellow and blue, brass-mounted, and screw-wigged turn-out of her acquaintances the *Kickwitches*, the mushroom aristocracy of retired "Putty and Lead!" And when Mr. Muff, who was no herald, hearing something about Mr. Bosky's arms being painted on the panels, innocently enquired whether his legs were not painted too?—at which Uncle Timothy involuntarily smiled—the scarlet-liverid pride of the Fubsys rushed into her cheeks, and she bridled up, wondering what there was in Mr. Muff's question to be laughed at. Knowing the susceptibility of Mrs. Flumgarten's nervous system, Uncle Timothy desired John Tompkins to drive moderately slow. This was "Scratching away at snail's pace! a cat's gallop!" "A little faster, John," said Uncle Timothy, mildly. This was racing along like "Sabbath-day, pleasure-taking, public-house people in a tax-cart!" Not an exhibition, prospect, person, or thing were to her mind. The dinner, which might have satisfied Apicius, she dismissed with "faint praise," sighing a supplementary

complaint, by way of errata, that there "*was no pickles!*"—and the carving—until the well-bred Mrs. Flumgarten snatched the knife and fork out of Uncle Timothy's hands—was "awful! horrid!" Then she never tastes such sherry as she does at her cousins' the *Shufflebothams*; and as for their black amber (Hambro?) grapes, oh! they were fit for your perfect gentlefolks!—An inquiry from mine host, whether Uncle Timothy preferred a light or full wine, drew forth this joocular answer, "I like a full wine, and a full bottle, Master Boniface."—"So do I," added the unguarded Mr. Muff. This was "tremendous!" The two ladies looked, at each other, and having decided on a joint scowl, it fell with annihilating blackness on the master-mason, and Mrs. Muff trod upon his toes under the table, a conjugal hint that Mr. Muff had taken enough! Mrs. Flumgarten had a momentary tiff with Mrs. Muff upon some trifling family jealousy, which brought into contest their diminutive dignities; but as the fond sisters had the good fortune to be Fubsys, and as the Fubsys enjoyed the exclusive privilege of abusing one another with impunity, the sarcastic compliments and ironical sneers they so lovingly exchanged passed for nothing after the first fire. The absence of Mr. Flumgarten, a scholar and a gentleman, who had backed out of this party of pleasure, (?) left his lady at a sad loss for *one* favorite subject in which she revelled, because it annoyed him; consequently there was no vulgar impertinent hits at "your clever people!" This hiatus led to some melancholy details of what she had suffered in her matrimonial pilgrimage.

"Suffered!" muttered the middle-aged gentleman, indignantly. "Yes, Madam Zantippa, you have suffered! But what? Why, your green-eyed illiterate prejudices to mar all that makes the domestic hearth intellectual and happy! Yes, you have reduced it to a cheerless desert, where you reign the restless fury of contradiction and discord!"

Master Guy Muff, the eldest born of Brutus, a youth who exhibited a capacious development of the eating and drinking organs, with a winning smile that would have made his fortune through a horse-collar, emerged from his post of honor behind the puffed sleeves and rustling skirts of "ma's," and aunt's silk gowns.

"Don't be frightened, Guy," said Mrs. Flumgarten, soothingly; "it's only Mr. Timwig."

"I arn't a-going to, aunt," snuffed the self-complaisant Master Guy.

"I hope, young gentleman," said Uncle Timothy, (for looking at the lump of living lumber, he did not venture to suppose,) "that you learn your lessons, and are perfect in your exercises."

"What,—hoop, skipping-rope, and pris'ner's base?"

"Can you parse?"

"Oh, yes? I pass my time in dumps and marloes."

"Speak your Christmas-piece, to Mr. Timtiffin, do, dear Guy!" said "ma," coaxingly.

Master Guy made the effort, Mr. Brutus Muff acting as prompter.

MASTER GUY (taking in each hand a dessert-plate).

"Look here upon this *pie-tur*, and on this, The counter—counter—"

"Sink the *shop*!" whispered Uncle Timothy.

MR. MUFF. "Fit presen-*ti*-ment—"

"You put the boy out, Mr. Muff, as you always do!" snarled Mrs. Muff.

MASTER MUFF.—

"—Of two brothers,
See what grace was seated on that brow;
Hy—Hy—"

"Isn't it something about *curls* and *front*!" said Mr. Muff.

"Mrs. Muff took this as an affront to her own particular jazey, which was bushily redolent of both; she darted a fierce *de la Fubsy* at the interrogator, that awed him to silence,

MASTER MUFF.—

A eye like *Ma's* to threaten and command—"

The subdued master-mason felt the full force of this line, to which his son Guy's appropriate pronunciation and personal stare gave a *new reading*. Here the juvenile spouter broke down, upon which Mrs. Flumgarten took his voice under her patronage, and having prevailed on him to try a song, the "young idea" began an excruciating wheeze, as if a pair of bellows had been invited to sing, the following *morceau*. "More so," said Mrs. Muff, encouragingly, "because pa said it was almost good enough to be sung a Sunday after *Tabernacle*."

There was a little bird,
His cage hung in the hall;
On Monday morning, May the third,
He couldn't sing at all.

And for this reason, mark,
Good people, great and small,
Because the pussy, for a lark,
Had eat him, bones and all.

"Ah!" cried Aunt F. approvingly, "that is a song! None of your frothy *comic* stuff that *some folks* (!!) is so fond of.

She now entertained Uncle Timothy with an account, full of bombast and brag, of some grand wedding that had recently been celebrated in the Fubsy family,—*Candlerigs* having condescended to adulterate the patrician of St. Giles's-in-the-Fields with the plebeian puddle of the City Gardens, the sometimes suburban retreat of the Fubsys, where they farmed a magnificent chateau, which, like the great Westphalian Baron de Thunder-tan-trouck's, had a door and a window. Uncle Timothy, to change the subject, called on Mr. Brutus Muff for a song.

"I never heard Mr. Muff sing, Mr. Timwig," chimed the sisters simultaneously.

"Indeed! Then, ladies, it will be the greater novelty. Come, my good sir; but the first glass of wine with you."

"Oh, Mr. *Timwidly*, you will make Mr. Muff quite top-heavy! It must be only *hglf* a glass," said Mrs. Muff authoritatively.

"The *top* half, if you please, madam," said the middle-aged gentleman; and he poured out a "regal purple stream" till it kissed without flowing over the brim. Mr. Muff brought the bumper to a level with his lips, and, as if half ashamed of what he was doing, put *both halves* out of sight!

"Is the man mad?" cried the amazed Mrs. Muff.

"Has he lost his senses?" ejaculated the bewildered Mrs. Flumgarten.

"He has found them, rather," whispered the satirical-nosed gentleman.

The bland looks and persuasive tones of Uncle Timothy, to say nothing of the last bumper, had wrought wonders on the master-mason. He looked Silenus-like and rosy, and glanced his little peering eye across the table—Mrs. Muff having a *voice* too in the affair—for an assenting nod from the fierce black velvet turban of his better and bigger half. But Mrs. Muff made no signs, and he paused irresolute; when another kind word from the middle-aged gentleman encouraged him at all hazards; to begin with,

Doctor Pott lived up one pair,
And reach'd his room by a comical stair!

Like all M.D.'s,
He pocketed fees
As quick as he could,
As doctors should!

And rented a knocker near Bloomsbury Square.

Tib his rib was not very young,

Wery short, wery tall,

Wery fair vithal;

But she had a tongue

Wery pat, wery glib

For a snow-white fib,

And wery vell hung!

"You shan't sing another line, *that* you shan't, Brutus!" vociferated Mrs. Muff. But the Cockney Roman, undaunted and vocal, went on singing,

Says Doctor Peter Pott, "As I know what's rhat,
My ante-nervous patent pill on Tib my rib I'll try;
If Mrs. P. vill swallow, iv dissolution follow,
And she should kick the bucket, I'm sure I shan't cry!"

"Where *could* he have learned such a rubbishing song? A man, too, after pa's own heart!" sighed Mrs. Muff.

MR. MUFF.—

And vel the doctor knew that a leer *pas les deux yeux*
Mrs. Pott vithstand could not, when shot from Peter's
eye;

So presently plump at her he opes his organic battery,
And said the pill it voulden't kill, no, not a ty!

"Have you *no* compassion for my poor nerves?" remonstrated Mrs. Muff pathetically.
"None vatsumdever," replied the stoical Brutus. "Vat compassion have you ever had for *mine*?"

"Besides," said he "I swear, d'ye see,
By the goods and chattels of Doctor P.
By my vig and my cane,
Brass knocker and bell,
And the cab in vich I cut *sich* a svel,
That single pill (a pill, by the by,
Is a dose!) if Mrs. Potts vill try,
Of gout and phtisic she'll never complain,
And never vant to take physic again."

Down it slid,
And she never did!

(The Doctor vith laughing was like to burst!)
For this very good reason—it finished her first

"I'll send," cried Mrs. Flumgarten, furiously, "for one of the L division."

"You may send to Old Nick for one of the L division!" shouted the valiant Mr. Muff, aspirating with particular emphasis the letter L.

"Here I lays, Teddy O'Blaise, (Singing)
And my body quite at its *aise* is;
With the top of my nose and the tops of my toes
Turn'd up to the roots of the daisies!

And now, my invaluable spouse, as I can't conveniently sing you any more moral lessons, I'll *tipple* you two or three!" And Mr. Muff, with admirable coolness and precision, filled himself a bumper. "First and foremost, from this day henceforer'd, I'm determined to be my own lord and master.

"Imprimis and secondly, I don't choose to be the hen-pecked, collywoffling, under-the-fear-of-his-wife-and-a-broomstick Jerry Sneak and Pollycoddle, that the Whitechapel pin-maker vas! . You shan't, like his loving Lizzy, currycombe my precious vig, and smuggle my last vill!"

"*Et tu Brute!*" said Uncle Timothy, in a half whisper.

"He *is* a brute!" sobbed Mrs. Flumgarten, "to speak so of dear pa!"

"Don't *purwoke* me, Mrs. Flumgarten, into 'fending and proving, or I shall let the cat out the bag, and the kittens into the bargain! By the Lord, Harry, I'll *peach*, Mrs. Muff.

Mrs. Flumgarten's unruly member was about to pour upon the master-mason a flood of Fubsyean eloquence, when *Prudence*, the family guardian angel, took her by the tongue's tip, as St. Dunstan took a certain ebony gentleman by the nose. She telegraphed Mrs. Muff, and Mrs. Muff telegraphed the intelligent Guy. Just as Brutus was fetching breath for another ebullition, with his hand on the decanter for another bumper, he found himself half throttled in the Cornish hug of his affectionate and blubbering first-born! When a chimney caught fire, it was a custom in Merrie England to drop down it a live *goose*, in the quality of extinguisher! And no goose ever performed its office better than the living Guy. He opened the flood-gates of his gooseberry eyes, and *played upon pa* so effectually, that Mr. Muff's ire or fire was speedily put out; and when, to prevent a coroner's inquest, the obedient child was motioned by the ladies to relax his filial embrace, the mollified master-mason began to sigh and sob too. The politic sisters now proposed to cut short their day's *pleasure!*—Uncle Timothy, to whom it was some consolation, that while he had been sitting upon thorns, his *tormentors* too, were a little nettled, seeing bluff John Tompkins in the stable yard grooming *con amore* one of Mr. Bosky's pet bloods, called out,

"John! I'm afraid we were too many this morning for that shying left-wheeler. Now, if he should take to kicking—"

"*Kicking!* Mr. Timwiddy!" screamed Mrs. Flumgarten.

"*Kicking!* Mr. Timwig!" echoed Mrs. Muff.

Herodotus (who practised what he preached) said, "When telling a lie will be profitable, let it be told!"—"He may lie," said Plato, "who knows *how* to do it in a suitable time." So thought John Tompkins! who hoping to frighten his unwelcome customers into an omnibus, and drive home Uncle Timothy in capital style, so aggravated the possible kickings, plungings, takings fright, and runnings away of that terrible left-wheeler, that the accommodating middle-aged gentleman was easily persuaded by the ladies to lighten the weight and diminish the danger, by returning to town by some other conveyance. And it was highly entertaining to mark the glum looks of John when he doggedly put the horses to, and how he mischievously let the whipcord into the sensitive flanks of the "shying left-wheeler," that honored every draft on his fetlocks, and confirmed the terrifying anticipations and multiplications of the veracious John Tompkins!

"Song sweetens toil, however rude the sound,"—and John sweetened *his* by humming the following, in which he ecored himself several times, as he drove Mrs. Flumgarten and family to town.

Dash along! splash along! hi, gee ho!
Four-and twenty periwigs all of a row!
Save me from a tough yarn twice over told—
Save me from a Jerry Sneak, and save me from a scold.

A horse is not a mare, and a cow is not a calf;
A woman that talks all day long has too much tongue
by half.

To the music of the fiddle I like to figure in;
But off I cut a caper from the music of the chin!

When Madam's in her tantrums, and Madam 'gins to
cry;

If you want to give her change, hold an ingun to her
eye;

But if she shakes her pretty fist, and longs to come to
blows,

You may slip through her fingers, if you only sope your
nose!

Dash along! splash along! hi, gee ho!

No horse so fast can gallop as a woman's tongue can go.
"Needs must," I have heard my granny say, "when the
devil drives."

I wish he drove instead of *me* this brace of scolding
wives!

George Daniel.

LOUIS NAPOLEON AND FRANCE.

Among the evils to be traced to the suppression of public discussion in such a country as France, none are more likely to be attended with mischievous consequences than this—that schemes of the most questionable character are thrust into public notice with the connivance of the Government, whilst they are protected from that criticism and investigation which can alone test their value and establish their character. And here we are not speaking of political objects or institutions, but of undertakings connected with the laws of credit and the interests of trade. The rudiments of social life are

subjected to the same coercion which hangs over the political existence of the French; and it is as unsafe or impossible to maintain before the French public a proposition of political economy adverse to the schemes of Louis Napoleon, as it would be to attack his title to the Imperial Crown. We have therefore read without astonishment, though with extreme regret, the observations recently published by the *Journal des Débats* in favour of one of the wildest financial schemes of the time, for we are convinced that nothing short of a necessity, of which happily we have no idea, could have wrung from our contemporary opinions so entirely at variance with every principle of financial prudence and economical science.

We have already cursorily adverted to the plan here alluded to, and it is so characteristic of the policy of the French Government, and so pregnant with disaster and disappointment, that we shall now lay the subject more fully before our readers. They are already aware that Louis Napoleon has adopted several measures in the course of the last year to facilitate what he terms the circulation of capital and to reduce the rate of interest. He has compelled the bank of France to reduce the rate of discount to three per cent., and, instead of confining its operations to commercial bills, to advance money at the same rate on public securities, and even on railway shares. He has also introduced the system of land banks, which is now in operation on a large scale, and is intended to facilitate advances on mortgage, and consequently to reduce the current rate of mortgages throughout the country. But these innovations are far less obnoxious to criticism than his last financial achievement, which is the creation of a huge Joint Stock Bank, whose statutes appear to us to include every defect which experience and reason have hitherto shown to be most fatal to such institutions. The capital of this bank is to be 60 millions of francs, or £2,400,000 sterling, divided into 120,000 shares at £20 a-piece. Of these shares one-third are already issued, representing a value of £800,000, and the means taken to introduce them to the Bourse were so skilful that within the week they have been sold at 120 per cent. premium.

Of the remaining 80,000 shares, one-third is to belong to the authors and directors of the institution, and the rest will be assigned to the other shareholders. Probably this condition will account for some of the eminent names which we see attached to the scheme; for, although the bankers of Paris may be willing to take advantage of the present mania for such speculations, there is certainly not one of them who can be ignorant of the penalty of such speculations, especially in France.

The professed object of this Joint Stock Bank with limited liability is to facilitate all transactions in moveable property; to advance money on shares of all kinds; to hold shares itself in all sorts of companies; to treat for loans and the execution of public works; and to lend the whole nominal value on the security of public stocks and shares, while it performs the functions of a bank of deposit. To enable it to render these multifarious services, it will be empowered to issue its own notes to an amount equal to its subscriptions and acquisitions (the term seems ambiguous), and these obligations may extend to five times the realised capital with the present issue of shares, or to ten times the realised capital when the whole amount has been paid up. These obligations will all be made payable at not less than 45 days, and they will generally extend to much longer periods; they will not therefore be, strictly speaking, convertible.

We are not asserting more than the experience of the most enterprising as well as of the most cautious modern nations abundantly justifies, when we declare that there is no example of a bank thus constituted withstanding the recoil of its own operations. Such experiments have been largely tried in the United States, and tried to some extent in this country and in Scotland, but never and nowhere, we believe, without disastrous results; though, indeed, no bank we ever heard of has professed at the very outset such an utter disregard of all those principles on which banking can be safely conducted. What would be the condition of such an establishment with five or even ten times the amount of its realised capital in outstanding liabilities, and all the rest in the most fluctuating forms of property, on which advances have been

made to their full value, if some political convulsion, or even some natural calamity smote this house of cards? Suppose war, suppose the sudden demise of a sovereign, suppose a famine, or any of the thousand chances from which mankind are never long free, and what preservation would such a bank offer against the worst? It would rise and fall with the tide, and a low ebb would cast it dry upon the beach.

The object of the founders of this company can hardly have been to create a permanent institution on such conditions, but this bubble may take advantage of the excited credulity of the nation to distribute into a thousand channels the present copious supply of money, aided by California and Australia; to throw a momentary glare over the operatic splendours of the new Empire; and to confirm the delusion that this new era is to be one of unbounded wealth, luxury and gain. That is no doubt its object, and, if its operations were confined to the next few months, in that object it would probably succeed. But the fallacy on which such undertakings rest is not the less certain or the less certain to be at last detected. To toss about money with unheard-of profusion is not to enrich a nation, but the reverse; and the circulation of credit, which these men mistake for the production of wealth, is in reality no more than the expedient of a spendthrift. It requires no elaborate argument, clothed with the authority of Turgot, to prove that the augmentation of capital is a fundamental cause of public prosperity; but there is this condition attached to the proposition—that this augmentation must be real. Louis Napoleon and his financial instruments go upon the notion that the same effects may be produced, though this augmentation of capital should be merely imaginary—that is, an augmentation of the paper that is to represent it. That is the principle of his letters of mortgage to encourage advances on land, and of his Joint Stock Bank, adapting itself to all the fluctuations of the Bourse. If Law had lived in our day, Louis Napoleon would have made him his Finance Minister, and thought that he had discovered the philosopher's stone; but it is a bitter reflection on mankind that the experiments of Law can be repeated more than a century after their

failure, by men who have his prodigality and assurance without his originality or his genius.

One of the secondary objects to which a bank of this nature may be applied, when it is more or less connected with or dependent on an absolute Government, is to throw its weight in favour of some undertakings and in opposition to others, and so to make the action of the State felt in all the transactions of the money-market. Here a loan may be wrested from a great contractor, there a railway may be depressed by the refusal to advance money on its shares, and above all, the public funds may be constantly stimulated by the application of an artificial demand. By these tricks all the ordinary tests of credit, of wealth, and of security are perplexed and confounded, and the interference of the Government is felt even in the value and convertibility of private property, whilst abundant means are found of providing for a large class of dependants by the frequent turns of these gambling speculations. The Government of France aims at holding in its grasp the whole mechanism of exchange and the fluctuations of the market; and it avails itself of the avidity and credulity of the present generation to attach them by all their passions to its own existence; but a Government which deals after this fashion with the laws of credit and of wealth incurs the heaviest responsibility which questions of property can impose; and it will one day bear the brunt of all the immoderate speculations which it now seeks to encourage.

CROSSING THE DESERT.

The road through the desert is most wonderful in its features: a finer cannot be imagined. It is wide, hard, firm, winding, for at least two-thirds of the way from Kosseir to Thebes, between ranges of rocky hills, rising often perpendicularly on either side, as if they had been scraped by art; here, again, rather broken and overhanging, as if they were the lofty banks of a mighty river, and you traversing its dry and naked bed. Now you are quite landlocked; now again you open on small valleys, and see upon heights beyond small square towers. It was late in the evening when we came to our

ground, a sort of dry bay and burning sand, with rock and cliff rising in jagged points all around—a spot where the waters of ocean might sleep in stillness, or, with the soft voice of their gentlest ripple, lull the storm-worn mariner. The dew of the night before had been heavy; we therefore pitched our tent, and decided on starting, in future, at a very early hour in the morning, so as to accomplish our march before noon. It was dark when we moved off, and even cold. Your camel is impatient to rise ere you are well seated on him; gives a shake, too, to warm his blood, and half dislodges you; marches rather faster than by day, and gives occasionally a hard quick stamp with his broad callous foot. Our moon was far in her wane. She rose, however, about an hour after we started, all red, above the dark hills on our left; yet higher rose, and paler grew, till at last she hung a silvery crescent in the deep blue sky. I claim for the traveller a love of that bright planet far beyond what the fixed and settled resident can ever know: the meditation of the lover, the open lattice, the villagers' castanets, are all in sweet character with the moon, or on her increase, or full-orbed; but the traveller (*especially in the East*), he loves her in the wane; so does the soldier at his still picquet of the night; and the sailor, on his silent watch, when she comes and breaks in upon the darkness of the night to soothe and bless him.

Who passes the desert and says all is barren, all lifeless? In the grey morning you may see the common pigeon, and the partridge, and the pigeon of the rock, alight before your feet, and come upon the beaten camel-paths for foot. They are tame, for they have not learned to fear or to distrust the men who pass these solitudes. The camel-driver would not lift a stone to them, and the sportsman could hardly find it in his heart to kill these gentle tenants of the desert. The deer might tempt him: I saw but one; far, very far, he caught the distant camel-tramp, and paused, and threw back his head to listen, then away to the road instead of from it; but far ahead he crossed it, and then away up a long slope he fleetly stole, and off to some solitary well which springs, perhaps, where no human being has ever trod. Here and

there you may meet with something of green—a tree alone, or two: nay, in one vale you may see some eight or ten—these are the acacias, small-leaved and thorny, yet kind, in that “they forsake not these forsaken places.” You have affections in the desert, too: your patient and docile camel is sometimes vainly urged if his fellow or his driver be behind: he will stop and turn, and give that deep, hoarse, gurgling sound, by which he expresses uneasiness and displeasure. It is something to have rode, though but for a few days, the camel of the desert. We always associate the horse with the Arab warrior, and the horse alone: also the crooked scimitar. Now, these belong to the Syrian and the Persian, the Mameluke and the Turk, as well. The camel is peculiar to the Arab alone. It was on the camel that Mahomet performed his flight to Medina. It was on a white she camel that he made his entry into that city. Seventy camels were arrayed by his side in the vale of Beder. And it was on his own red camel that the Caliph Omar, with his wooden dish and leathern water-bottle, and his bag of dates, came to receive the keys of the holy city of Jerusalem, and the submission and homage of the patriarch Sophronius. “Moreover, it is on a winged white camel, in a golden saddle, that the Moslem who is faithful to the end believes that he shall ride hereafter.”—*Scenes and Impressions in Egypt, &c.*

THE MOCKING-BIRD.

The plumage of the Mocking-Bird, though none of the homeliest, has nothing gaudy or brilliant about it, and had he nothing else to recommend him, would scarcely entitle him to notice, but his figure is well proportioned, and even handsome. The ease, elegance, and rapidity of his movements, the animation of his eye, and the intelligence he displays in listening, and laying up lessons from almost every species of the feathered creation within his hearing, are really surprising, and mark the peculiarity of his genius. To these qualities we may add that of a voice full, strong, and musical, and capable of almost every modulation, from the clear mellow tones of the Wood Thrush, to the savage scream of the Bald Eagle. In the measure and accent, he faithfully follows his originals. In force and

sweetness of expression, he greatly improves upon them. In his native groves, mounted on the top of a tall bush or half-grown tree, in the dawn of dewy morning, while the woods are already vocal with a multitude of warblers, his admirable song rises pre-eminent over every competitor. The ear can listen to his music alone, to which that of the others seems a mere accompaniment. Neither is this strain altogether imitative. His own native notes, which are easily distinguishable by such as are well acquainted with those of our various song birds, are bold and full, and varied seemingly beyond all limits. They consist of short expressions of two, three, or at the most five or six syllables, generally interspersed with imitations, and all of them uttered with great emphasis and rapidity, and continued with undiminished ardour for half an hour at a time. His expanded wings and tail glistening with white, and the buoyant gaiety of his action arresting the eye, as his song most irresistibly does the ear, he sweeps round with enthusiastic ecstasy—he mounts and descends as his song swells or dies away; and, as my friend Mr. Bartram has beautifully expressed it, “He bounds aloft with the celerity of an arrow, as if to recover or recal his very soul, expired to the last elevated strain.” While exerting himself, a bystander, destitute of sight, would suppose that the whole feathered tribe had assembled together on a trial of skill, each striving to produce his utmost effect, so perfect are his imitations. He many times deceives the sportsman, and sends him in search of birds that perhaps are not within miles of him, but whose notes he exactly imitates; even birds themselves are frequently imposed on by this admirable mimic, and are decoyed by the fancied calls of their mates; or dive, with precipitation into the depth of thickets, at the scream of what they suppose to be the Sparrow Hawk.

The Mocking-Bird loses little of the power and energy of his song by confinement. In his domesticated state, when he commences his career of song, it is impossible to stand by uninterested. He whistles for the dog; Cæsar starts up, wags his tail, and runs to meet his master. He squeaks out like a hurt chicken, and the hen hurries about with hanging wings and bristled feathers, clucking to protect her injured brood. The barking of the dog, the mewling of the cat, the creaking of a passing wheelbarrow, follow with great truth and rapidity. He repeats the tune taught him by

his master, though of considerable length, fully and faithfully. He runs over the quiverings of the Canary, and the clear whistlings of the Virgin Nightingale, or Redbird, with such superior execution and effect, that the mortified songsters feel their own inferiority, and become altogether silent, while he seems to triumph in their defeat by redoubling his exertions.

This excessive fondness for variety, however, in the opinion of some, injures his song. His elevated imitations of the Brown Thrush are frequently interrupted by the crowing of the cocks; and the warblings of the Bluebird, which he exquisitely manages, are mingled with the screamings of the swallows, or the cackling of hens; amidst the simple melody of the Robin, we are suddenly surprised by the shrill reiterations of the Whip-poor-will; while the notes of the Killdeer, Blue Jay, Martin, and twenty others, succeed with such imposing reality, that we look round for the originals, and discover, with astonishment, that the sole performer in this singular concert is the admirable bird now before us. During this exhibition of his powers, he spreads his wings, expands his tail, and throws himself around the cage in all the ecstacy of enthusiasm, seeming not only to sing, but to dance, keeping time to the measure of his music. Both in his native and domesticated state, during the solemn stillness of night, as soon as the moon rises in silent majesty, he begins his delightful solo, and serenades us the live-long night with a full display of his vocal powers, making the whole neighbourhood ring with his inimitable medley.—*Wilson's American Ornithology.*

AN AWKWARD POSITION.

In youth, with all its gaiety and excitement, “time passes o’er us with a noiseless lapse;” and his course is swift and trackless as that of a bird. Spring was now gone, and it was summer. The halls of the College were once more deserted, and I, too, made preparation for departure.

The first of May is the day fixed by immemorial usage in the University for the distribution of the prizes: a day looked forward to with “hopes, and fears that kindle hope,” by many youthful and ardent spirits. The great hall of the college on that day certainly presents a very pleasing and animated spectacle. The academical distinctions are bestowed with much of ceremonial pomp, in presence of a vast concourse of spectators, and it is not uninteresting to mark the flush of bashful triumph on the cheek of the victor,—the sparkling of his downcast eye, as the hall is rent with loud applause,

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when he advances to receive the badge of honour assigned him by the voice of his fellow-students. It is altogether a sight to stir the spirit in the youthful bosom, and stimulate into healthy action faculties which, but for such excitement, might have continued in unbroken slumber. Of such distinctions, irregular as my habits of study had been, I was a partaker. In some of my classes I stood first,—in all I carried off some mark of successful application; and, in now looking back on the year which I spent in the College of Glasgow, I cannot but refer to it the acquisition of that love of literature which has never died within me, and in which I have found a relief and a resource, under circumstances when its place could not have been otherwise supplied.

Of my family I have of late said little, yet they were but seldom absent from my thoughts, and with the different members of it I kept up a constant intercourse by letter. My father seldom wrote to me, and when he did, his letters betrayed little of that affectionate feeling which might be expected to breathe in the confidential intercourse of a parent, and an only son. His letters were indeed neither harsh nor unkind, but they were cold and stately, and in character those of a monitor rigid in the performance of a duty, more than of a father, whose hopes were garnered up in the object he addressed. From my mother I heard more frequently, but writing was an exertion to which she was frequently unequal, and my principal correspondent was Jane. In the letters of that dear sister, nothing that interested me was too insignificant to find a place. She gathered information from the grooms and the keeper of my stud and kennel, which she faithfully imbodyed (bating a few technical mistakes) in her epistles. She told me of Hecuba, my favourite old mare, and enlarged on the colour and beauty of her foal, which little Lucy fed daily in the paddock. She spoke, too, of Don and Ponto,—of Ariel, my little spaniel, petted and caressed by all for the sake of her absent master. The accounts which I received from Jane of my mother's health, though unfavourable, did not excite in me any alarm. Nor did either Jane or my father appear to feel such. She had, I was told, become more feeble, but a trip to Brighton was meditated, and the sea-breezes would restore her strength. She suffered from a severe cough; but this the warmth of the approaching summer would remove. Her spirits, too, were good, and her letters betrayed no symptom of the languor of disease. It is not the character of youth to anticipate evil. Death is then regarded as a distant though inevitable event, to whose dreaded approach we shut our eyes and stop our ears, till his chariot-wheels are at hand, and he already thunders at the gate.

In this situation did matters stand, when, at the conclusion of the college session, I wrote to my father to learn his wishes as to my motions. My friend Conyers was about to visit one of his guardians in Yorkshire, an old fox-hunting squire, where he was to remain till a cornetcy of dragoons had been obtained for him. We

proposed a tour by the lakes, and he pressed me to accompany him on his visit, before returning to my own family. I mentioned this scheme to my father, and requested his consent. He gave it, but desired that I would take advantage of my being in Yorkshire to offer a visit to our relation the Earl of Amersham, with whom, from the seclusion in which my father had spent the latter years of his life, little intercourse during my remembrance, had been maintained. To the advantages which might arise from keeping up this connexion he was not insensible. The Earl was ministerial in his politics, and had a borough or two at command; and therefore he was, at least, a person worth courting, by a young man just about to enter the world with fewer friends and smaller fortune than was desirable. My mother wrote accordingly to the Countess, with whom she had at one period of her life been intimate, informing her that she could not hear of my being in Yorkshire without feeling anxious that I should become personally known to the relations for whom both she and my father entertained so perfect a regard.

Preliminaries being at length settled for our departure, Conyers and myself set forth on our excursion with light and joyous hearts. My parting with my uncle was to me an affecting one. Before I rose to say farewell, at our last interview, we had been conversing for about an hour. I had laid before him with perfect openness and sincerity my hopes and prospects, for I then regarded him only as a warm and faithful friend. He could scarcely be expected to approve of my partiality for a military life, but he had knowledge enough of character to perceive that my inclinations were not to be controlled on the matter, and he did not seriously attempt it.

"Weel, Cyril," said he, "since ye will be a sodger, and are fool enough to gang to be shot at for twa or three shillings a day, when ye might stay at hame and do far better, it's needless for me to try and reason you out o' what I see ye've set your heart on. But gang where ye like, ye'll hae the prayers o' an auld man for the blessings o' Providence on your head. May God's mercy be a fence and a buckler to you in the day of battle, and his grace ever guide you and protect you in the perilous course of life on which you are about to enter."

Here the old man was silent, the expression of his face was stern and unmoved as ever, but my own heart sympathetically told me of all that was working in his. Tears gushed from my eyes as I rose to bid him adieu. I endeavoured,—but I could not speak. He grasped my hand in his, with a strong and yet somewhat tremulous pressure. For a minute there was silence, but the old man became gradually calmer, and thus spoke:—"Farewell, Cyril, farewell; it's like that on this side o' the grave we may never meet again. Yet I may live to hear o' your well-doing, and that will be to me the best and maist joyfu' tidings I can hear in this world. Gang,—but mind while I live, gin ye want a friend to help you in time of need,

ye hae yin in your auld uncle that will no forsake you in your trouble. Gang,—and an auld man's blessing be on your head, and his prayers shall follow for your happiness and prosperity, wherever it may please God that your lot may be cast." As he spoke, he laid his hand solemnly on my head; then embracing me he turned suddenly from me. I rushed, much moved, from the apartment, and in a moment found myself—in the arms of Girzy. Before I succeeded in extricating myself from this unpleasant predicament I had undergone the penalty of several kind kisses, while I felt her arms clasp my neck with such a gripe, as that with which a vulture seizes a lamb. "Just promise to come back again," said the worthy creature, with red eyes and in a choking voice—"just promise to come back and see us again, and I'll let you gang."

"Yes, yes," I answered, anxious to escape, and quite overcome by this unexpected prolongation of the scene—"yes, and may God bless you;" and by a sudden effort I released myself from her grasp, and effected my escape.

No cure for mental depression is so efficacious as travelling. My heart was heavy when, seated in the Carlisle mail *vis-a-vis* to my friend Conyers, we whirled rapidly through the Gallowgate, and bade a long, probably an eternal farewell to Glasgow. With reverted eyes I gazed upon the lofty towers of the cathedral, till, by the increasing distance, they could no longer be distinctly traced in the dense canopy of smoke which overhung the city. My attention, however, was soon engrossed by the new objects which were constantly presenting themselves as we advanced, and long before we reached Hamilton, "my bosom's lord sat lightly on its throne," and my spirits were light and buoyant as the air I breathed.

Never did I pass a more delightful week than that which we spent in the neighbourhood of the lakes, in exploring their transcendent scenery. Amid such objects, and at such an age, was it possible for beings with hearts young and unoppressed by the cares of the world to be otherwise than happy? We required no artificial stimulus,—no extraneous excitement, to goad on our fancy to enjoyment. "The common air, the earth, the skies," were in themselves all sufficient. They gave us then what millions, did I possess them, could not purchase now. In youth happiness is cheap, but the enjoyments of a jaded spirit must be dearly bought, and when bought are vapid.

On quitting the lakes, a day's journey brought us to the house of Squire Parkyns, who received both his ward and myself with a hearty welcome. He was a gentleman of a good estate, and a justice of the quorum, a warm-hearted and well-meaning man, and marked by that devotion to field-sports "which is the badge of all his tribe;" but I should imagine one of the most unfit persons in the world to be intrusted with the guardianship of a young man. His wife, Conyers told me, had been dead many years, and he had lost an only son, whose skull had been fractured by a fall from his horse, when out hunting. The old

man's spirits had long succumbed under this latter blow, but they had again recovered, and, notwithstanding he had three daughters married in the neighbourhood, he preferred keeping what is called "bachelor's hall," to again submitting his establishment to female management and control. To a jovial old spirit like this the society of Conyers and myself was not unpleasing. We admired and praised his stud, listened to his sporting anecdotes, and in all disputes about hunting or shooting deferentially chose him as our umpire. In three days we drank him into a fit of the gout, and in three more I received a letter from Lord Amersham, expressing in courtly phrase his thanks for the proposed visit, and the delight which both he and Lady Amersham would feel in receiving at Staunton Court the son of his old and valued friend.

After receiving this communication, I spent a week in the society of Conyers and the old Squire, before I could bring myself to think of taking my departure. Even then I was induced more than once to uncord and unpack my trunks when all prepared for a start, and to add another day to the duration of my sojourn. With regard to Conyers, our characters amalgamated wonderfully, and a strong mutual regard had grown up between us. Of all the men I have ever known, Conyers, I think, possessed in the greatest degree the power of conciliating attachment. He was indeed a fine and generous creature, and the gaiety of his spirit, the openness of his disposition, and his entire recklessness of self, were enough to disarm the censure of the most rigid moralist on his failings.

At length we parted, but there was no tinge of melancholy in our adieu—we embraced, vowed friendship, and bade farewell, with all the warmth and sincerity, yet with all the light-heartedness, of youth. We were about to enter on the same profession, to encounter the same dangers, to mingle in the same world. We were to meet frequently, and were destined to pass many happy days in each other's society—we were but to enjoy the pleasures, to pluck the rose of life; and as for its thorns,—we thought not—knew not of them.

And so we parted. The Gazette shortly after informed me that Charles was appointed to a cornetcy of dragoons in a regiment then stationed in Ireland. Soon after joining, he wrote me in ecstasies of his new profession, entreating me to procure, if possible, a commission, then vacant in the regiment. But it was yet dubious whether my father would consent to my becoming a soldier. In any case it was very certain that my preference for a particular regiment would be treated by him as a mere boyish whim, and disregarded as such. Under present circumstances, therefore, I felt and knew the obstacles to the accomplishment of my wishes to be insurmountable. Years of separation elapsed. Our correspondence, regular at first, became gradually less frequent, as the pleasures and business of the world thickened around us and more deeply engrossed our thoughts; and long before we again met it had been altogether discontinued.

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On parting from my friend and the old Squire, I had thirty miles to travel before reaching Staunton Court, the seat of my noble relatives. Hitherto I had mixed but little in society, and that little only in the character of a boy. The dignity of a grown man—a gentleman—which I had known only by anticipation, I was now for the first time to enjoy; and it was not without a sense of novel dignity, that I felt myself about to take part in a scene, which, even to my own imagination, seemed worthy of the actor. Still it was with some palpitations of the heart,—some more than wonted misgivings of my own power of pleasing, that I beheld the gates of the lodge thrown open at my approach, and thought, as the carriage wound along the stately and serpentine approach that the wished-for moment was at hand.

The park was extensive, and stocked with the finest timber. Large herds of deer were cropping the pastures, or reclining in the shades. Every thing around gave indication of magnificent antiquity,—of a residence which in my imagination well befitted one whose ancestors had bled in the Crusades—a descendant of those noble barons who gained, at their sword's point, the great and enduring charter of their country's freedom. The hand of wealth indeed was everywhere visible, but with none of that tinsel ornament and gewgaw profusion which marks the splendour of a *nouveau riche*.

An approach of three miles brought us at length in sight of the house. It was a large and massive pile of building, of a quadrangular form, and showing, in its style of architecture, that picturesque peculiarity by which the works of Inigo Jones, our English Palladio, are generally distinguished. The house had originally been surrounded by a moat, but that was now dry, and planted with flowers and shrubs of singular beauty and luxuriance. Across this was thrown a bridge of light and graceful construction, terminated by an arch, over which the arms of the family, surmounted by an earl's coronet, were cut in high relief, and supported on either flank by a ferocious dragon, displaying all the exuberance of tail and tusk with which heralds usually rejoice to adorn their fabulous creations. Beneath, the motto, "*A gladio et per gladium*," was emblazoned in golden characters, and harmonized well with my own ideas of the chivalrous dignity of baronial tenure.

On descending from the carriage, I entered a circular hall of spacious dimensions, the roof of which ascended to the full height of the building, and was lighted by a cupola in the centre. The walls were wainscotted and hung with pictures, and on a pedestal in the centre stood a statue of Charles the Second, who, in the days of his adversity, had found both welcome and safety within the walls of Staunton. I was ushered across the magnificent apartment through a troop of liveried menials, and, after ascending a short marble staircase, adorned and perfumed by a double row of exotics, entered the library, which I found untenanted. The groom of the chambers then informed me

that neither Lord nor Lady Amersham were at home, and requested to know whether I chose any refreshment after my journey. To this I answered in the negative; and the attendant, making a polite bow, quitted the apartment. Thus left alone, and perhaps a little daunted by the pomp and ceremony by which the scene around me was invested, I seated myself in an easy chair, and once more gave the reins to my fancy.

I pictured to myself the owner of this splendid demesne. "Undoubtedly," I said, "he is a person of lofty carriage and finished elegance of manner; proud, for how can he be otherwise?—but his is a generous pride, ever veiled in courtesy to his equals, and kindness to his inferiors. Raised by his wealth and station above the petty cares and anxieties by which meaner men are agitated, he is liberal, nay, munificent in his ideas, with a hand open as day to melting charity. He is a hero,—for the blood of the noblest chivalry of England flows in his veins. He is a patriot,—for he cannot forget the country to which he owes so much. He is loyal,—for his station marks him out as an hereditary bulwark of the throne."

In this manner did my imagination run on, adding new colours to the picture it had drawn, till the owner of the mansion seemed to stand before me, invested with every possible grace and excellence.

"And I am now," thought I, "to appear in the presence of this noble and transcendent personage. With what an air of deference and respect must I address him, and what impression can I, a raw, ignorant, and untutored boy, expect to make on one, whose taste and talents must, at a glance, lay bare to him the whole extent of my deficiencies? I shall at least do my best," resolved I, and, rising from my chair, advanced towards a pier-glass, in front of which I began to practise such bows and deferential modes of address, as appeared to me best suited to so formidable an introduction. In order to derive all possible benefit from this preparatory rehearsal, I judged it right to suit the word to the action, addressing myself first in the character of Lord Amersham, and then framing a fitting answer in my own.

"Mr. Thornton," said I, as his lordship's mouthpiece, assuming, at the same time, an air of graceful dignity, mingled with much kindness and condescension, "I am delighted to have the honour of welcoming you for the first time to Staunton Court. Believe me, I sincerely rejoice in this opportunity of cultivating an acquaintance which circumstances have long, too long, delayed. Lady Amersham, let me present to you our relation, Mr. Cyril Thornton. Lady Melicent, I beg to introduce your cousin."

"My lord," replied I, in my own character, making, as I spoke, a profound obeisance, "do me the honour, I pray your lordship, to accept my very sincere thanks for your kindness and condescension. To Lady Amersham and my fair cousin I—"

Here I was interrupted by a half-suppressed titter in the apartment—a sound at that time

more dreadful to my ear than would have been that of the explosion of a mine beneath my feet, or the hissing of a boa constrictor beneath the drawing-room table. I stood for an instant as if transfixed, my head bent forward in the act of addressing my noble host, and my right hand extended to receive the friendly pressure of his palm. At length, assuming the courage of despair, I determined to know the worst at once. I raised my head, and, looking round, beheld two young ladies, who had evidently been witnesses of my absurd exhibition. Fancy a youth of acute, nay, almost morbid sensibility placed in such a situation, and it is possible, barely possible, if you are a person of strong imagination, that you may form some inadequate idea of the spiritual torture I then suffered. If anything in this world can afford a good spology for suicide, it is undoubtedly such a detection as that of which I was the subject. Luckily, neither pistol, razor, nor penknife presented themselves, nay, not a bodkin, or I verily believe that instant had terminated my mortal career. From the top of my head to the sole of my foot I had a pulse throbbing like a sledgehammer in every inch. My eyes stared wildly round, in the hopeless effort to find some avenue of escape. I would have given my inheritance for a snug birth in the coal-cellar, or have paid down a handsome difference to have changed situations with Daniel in the lions' den. I would have caught at a cell in the Inquisition, or the dungeon of Baron Trenck, and have thought the penalty a light one, compared with the agonizing horror of such a detection. Never did Ghost Gorgon, or Chimæra appear so terrific to human eyes as did the vision of these two elegant and blooming girls at that moment to mine.

They stood near the fireplace, shawled and bonneted, as if just returned from a walk. One of them was curiously reconnoitring me through an eyeglass, and the other, with her handkerchief to her mouth, was evidently endeavouring to suppress a laugh, in which she was not wholly successful. What could I do? To prolong the ridicule of my situation, by continuing to stand before the mirror, was impossible; to advance or retire equally dreadful. Which evil I at length preferred, whether I rushed on Scylla or Charybdis, my mind was in too great a state of confusion to enable me now to recollect.

"What a very odd person!" observed one of my fair tormentors, in a half whisper.

"Yes, a delightful original," replied her companion; and, making a strong effort to resume her gravity, she advanced, and thus addressed me: "Since chance has thrown us together, there is, I think, no reason to wait for a formal introduction. Some expressions of your soliloquy which we accidentally overheard sufficiently betrayed that you are Mr. Cyril Thornton, who has been, I know, an expected guest for some days. Mr. Thornton, let me introduce you to Miss Pynsent—Miss Pynsent, Mr. Thornton."

In reply to this address, delivered with the most perfect self-possession, and an air of grace

and high breeding, the union of which was remarkable in one evidently so young, I stammered out some inquiries for Lord and Lady Amersham, bowed, and, I supposed, looked like a blockhead. I am very sure I felt like one. The ice, however, was now broken; and though, in a case like the present, it cannot exactly be said that "*ce ne que le premier pas qui coute*," it is certainly true that the *premier pas* is, out of sight, the most painful and difficult, and each succeeding one becomes comparatively easy. The young lady was lively and animated, and did not suffer the conversation to languish; and I might have hoped that my folly had been either overlooked or forgotten, had I not observed that a look of laughing intelligence was occasionally interchanged between the fair companions.

"Come, Julia," at length said the Lady Melicent, "our mal-apropos intrusion has already too long interrupted the rhetorical studies of Mr. Thornton,"—at the same time rising to depart,—“we must get rid of these odious walking habiliments. Mamma and Lady Pynsent are gone to call at Feversham Park,” continued she, addressing me, and looking at her watch. “It is now half-past four o'clock, and we do not dine till seven, so you still have two hours to practice oratory; but should you tire of that and choose a turn in the park, you will probably meet papa at the farm, to which any one will direct you. *Au revoir*; pray do not forget to introduce in your speech something peculiarly elegant about your *fair cousin*.” So saying, she linked her arm in that of her sister grace, and with the lightness of sylphs they glided out of the apartment.

She spoke with a wicked archness of look, and there was a laughing devil in her eye, by no means soothing to my irritated sensibilities; and when left alone, I for some time paced the apartment with long and irregular strides, reflecting, in no enviable mood, on the ridiculous figure I must have cut before those very persons in whose eyes I was most anxious to make a favourable impression. It may be imagined, I had no inclination to resume the exercise in which I had been so unseasonably interrupted. I determined, therefore, on a stroll in the park, and to effect my introduction to Lord Amersham, in case I should encounter him in my walk.

The air and exercise tended to calm my spirits, and somewhat to restore the self-composure of which my unfortunate debut in the library had so totally deprived me. There is something in the very aspect of nature—in its simplest sounds and commonest features—soothing and delightful. They seem as if intended to act as an oblivious antidote to those mental perturbations which are generated by the cares and anxieties of artificial life. For such wounds nature has provided a simple medicament, which the united experience of mankind proves to be efficacious. The citizen retires to his box at Hackney or on Champion-hill, and the lawyer “babbles of green fields,” at his villa in Kent or Hertfordshire. They are conscious of the effect, though perhaps ignorant

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of the cause. They feel that the thousand tight-drawn ligaments which bind them to the world are for the moment loosened,—the shackles fall from their limbs, and they draw from the bosom of nature that simple nourishment, which strengthens and braces them again to undergo the repetition of their daily toils.

Of this restorative power I felt in my ramble the full medicinal efficacy. The park was fine and extensive. The venerable oaks cast their shadows broader as the sun sunk in the horizon, on the green sward beneath them and around. The birds were carolling their vespers, and the deer that stood on a neighbouring eminence tossing high their branchy foreheads, showed like creatures embedded in the purple glory of the sky.

Occupied with the scene around me, I had forgotten my purpose of seeking Lord Amersham, till warned of the necessity of returning to the house, by the sound of the first dinner-bell. I had turned for that purpose, and was leisurely retracing my steps to the mansion, when I observed a person of rather outre appearance approaching hastily in a diagonal direction, evidently with the wish to overtake me. I accordingly waited for his approach, and as he advanced, had time to take a pretty accurate observation of his person.

He was dressed in a jacket of bottle-green, garnished with buttons of mother-of-pearl, of dimensions unusually large. His nether integuments were of dark plush, and over his legs, which were exceedingly clumsy and unshapely, he wore gaiters, the under part of which was of cloth, and the upper of dingy-coloured leather. His beaver was of a brab colour, distinguished by an unusual latitude of brim, and bearing evident marks of long exposure to the vicissitudes which mark our climate. In his hand he carried a long pole, terminating at its lower extremity in a weeding-hook. His figure was round and squab, of ungainly proportions, and marked, when in motion, by a singular jerking of the body and limbs, producing altogether rather a ludicrous effect. His face and head were large. The former slightly pitted by the small-pox, and displaying features coarse and apparently unsuited to each other, constituting just such a countenance as one might be supposed to form, were he to select a feature from each of his ugly acquaintances, and huddle them altogether into one visage. Judging from the *tout ensemble*, he might be park-keeper or farmer; one probably well to do in the world, and in his obesity furnishing at once a practical illustration and comment on the "scope and tendency of Bacon."

Curious to know what such a person could want with me, and taking compassion on the exertions which his pursuit evidently cost him, I stopped my walk, which at first I had only slackened, till he came up. For some seconds he was unable to speak, and stood panting for breath to enable him to commence his address.

"Mr. Cyril Thornton, I presume?" said this grotesque personage. I bowed in acquiescence, and without pausing, he proceeded.

"Beg ten thousand pardons, that you should have been left so long alone.—Delighted to see you at Staunton.—Saw your carriage pass, and guessed it was you, but was so busy with Sam Brown (my farm bailiff) that I could not escape one moment to welcome you. We farmers, Mr. Thornton, as you will probably know by-and-by, are literally *adscripti glebæ*; we must follow the plough, and trust to the good-nature of our friends to forgive omissions. You must come to-morrow, and see my farm; I'll show you stock worth the seeing. But let us move on now, for the dinner-bell has rung, and we have no time to stand chattering."

This voluble address was so rapidly enunciated, that I found it impossible to hitch in anything in reply; and as we proceeded towards the house, the Earl, for he it was, still continued to talk.

"Hope you left your family quite well?—Your mother is a charming woman,—first saw her at a ball at Bath, two, three, four, five-and-twenty years ago,—turned the heads of all the young men of those days. Your father, too, a most worthy and excellent person, and my particular friend. But oh! I forget, you're not from Thornhill; I think I heard you were at school at—at—Manchester?"

"At the College at Glasgiew, my Lord," interrupted I, rather piqued at the mistake, and unwilling to be mistaken for a Manchester schoolboy.

"Oh, ah, Glasgow was it?—my memory is so bad, and I am apt to make a sad jumble when talking of those—as Mr. Pitt called them, 'great emporiums of commerce,'—Leeds, Sheffield, Glasgow, Manchester. I knew you were at one or another of them, though not exactly certain which. Glasgow, eh? Then you're from Scotland, and must tell me all about the Scotch farming,—the succession of crops, and all that,—Scotch black-faced sheep too, capital mutton, but devils for leaping fences,—not so good on the huggins as Leicestershire, and coarse in the fleece. Notwithstanding all you've seen in Scotland, flatter myself you'll like our farming in Yorkshire. To-morrow morning you must come to the farm and see my new patent thrashing-machine—nine-horse power, and managed by a boy."

We now reached the house, and the necessity of speedy preparations for dinner occasioned an abrupt termination to be put to the conversation. I retired, accordingly, for this purpose, and when engaged in the operations of the toilet, could scarce refrain from smiling, when I remembered how ludicrously all my anticipations of the person, manners, and character of Lord Amersham had been at variance with the fact.—*Hamilton.*

WHEN DEMETRIUS conquered the city of Magara, and every-thing had been plundered by his soldiers, he ordered the philosopher Stilpon to be called before him, and asked him whether he had not lost his property in this confusion. "No," replied Stilpon, "as all I possess is in my head."

FLIRTATION EXTRAORDINARY.

There is a fashion in everything—more especially in everything feminine, as we luckless wearers of caps and petticoats are, of all other writers, bound to allow: the very faults of the ladies (if ladies can have faults), as well as the terms by which those faults are distinguished, change with the changing time. The severe but honest puritan of the Commonwealth was succeeded by the less rigid, but probably less sincere prude; who, from the Restoration to George the Third's day, seems, if we may believe those truest painters of manners—the satirists and the comic poets—to have divided the realm of beauty with the fantastic coquette—*L'Allegro* reigning over one half of the female world, *Il Penseroso* over the other.

With the decline of the artificial comedy, these two grand divisions amongst women, which had given such life to the acted drama, and had added humour to the prose of Addison and point to the verse of Pope, gradually died away. The Suspicious Husband of Dr. Hoadly, one of the wittiest and most graceful of those graceful and witty pictures of manners, which have now wholly disappeared from the comic scene, is, I think, nearly the last in which the characters are so distinguished.—The wide-reaching appellations of prude and coquette,* the recognizable title, the definite classification, the outward profession were gone, whatever might be the case with the internal propensities; and the sex, somewhat weary, it may be, of finding itself called by two names, neither of them very desirable, the one being very disagreeable and the other a little naughty, branched off into innumerable sects, with all manner of divisions and sub-divisions, and has contrived to exhibit during the last sixty or seventy years as great a variety of humours, good or bad, and to deserve and obtain as many epithets (most of them sufficiently ill-omened), as its various and capricious fellow-biped called man.

Amongst these epithets were two which I well remember to have heard applied some thirty years ago to more than one fair lady in the good town of Belford, but which have now passed away as completely as their disparaging predecessors, coquette and prude. The "words of fear" in question were "satirical" and "sentimental." With the first of these sad nicknames we have nothing to do. Child as I was, it seemed to me at the time, and I think so more strongly on recollection, that in two or three instances the imputation was wholly undeserved; that a girlish gaiety of heart on the one hand, and a womanly fineness of observation on the other, gave rise to an accusation which mixes a little, and a very little, cleverness with a great deal of ill-nature. But with the fair satirist, be the appellation true or false, we have no concern; our business is with one lady of the class sentimental, and with one, and

one only, of those adventures to which ladies of that class are, to say the least, peculiarly liable.

Miss Selina Savage (her detractors said that she was christened Sarah, founding upon certain testimony, of I know not what value, of aunts and godmothers; but I abide by her own signature, as now lying before me in a fine slender Italian hand, at the bottom of a note somewhat yellow by time, but still stamped in a French device of *penses* and *soucis*, and still faintly smelling of attar of roses; the object of the said note being to borrow "Mr. Pratt's exquisite poem of Sympathy.")—Miss Selina Savage (I hold by the autograph) was a young lady of uncertain age; there being on this point also a small variation of ten or a dozen years between her own assertions and those of her calumniators; but of a most sentimental aspect (in this respect all were agreed); tall, fair, pale, and slender, she being so little encumbered with flesh and blood, and so little tinted with the diversity of colouring thereunto belonging,—so completely blonde in hair, eyes, and complexion, that a very tolerable portrait of her might be cut out in white paper, provided the paper were thin enough, or drawn in chalks, white and black, upon a pale brown ground. Nothing could be too shadowy or too vapoury; the Castle Spectre, flourishing in all the glory of gauze drapery on the stage of Drury-Lane—the ghosts of Ossian made out of the mists of the hills—were but types of Miss Selina Savage. Her voice was like her aspect, sighing, crying, dying; and her conversation as lachrymose as her voice; she sang sentimental songs, played sentimental airs, wrote sentimental letters, and read sentimental books; has given away her parrot for laughing, and turned off her foot-boy for whistling a country-dance.

The abode of this amiable damsel was a small neat dwelling, somewhat inconveniently situated, at the back of the Holy Brook, between the Abbey Mills on the one side and a great timber wharf on the other, with the stream running between the carriage-road and the house, and nothing to unite them but a narrow foot-bridge, which must needs be crossed in all weathers. It had, however, certain recommendations which more than atoned for these defects in the eyes of its romantic mistress; three middle-sized cypress-trees at one end of the court; in the front of her mansion two well-grown weeping-willows; an address to "Holy Brook Cottage," absolutely invaluable to such a correspondent, and standing in most advantageous contrast with the streets, terraces, crescents, and places of which Belford was for the most part composed; and a very fair chance of excellent material for the body of her letters by the abundant casualties and Humane Society cases afforded by the footbridge—no less than one old woman, three small children, and two drunken men having been ducked in the stream in the course of one winter. Drowning would have been too much of a good thing; but of that, from the shallowness of the water, there was happily no chance.

* Perhaps flirt may be held to be no bad substitute: Yes! flirt and coquette may pass for synonymous. But under what class of women of this world shall we find the prude? The very species seems extinct.

Miss Savage, with two quiet, orderly, light-footed, and soft-spoken maidens, had been for some years the solitary tenant of the pretty cottage by the Holy-Brook. She had lost her father during her early childhood; and the death of her mother, a neat, quiet old lady, whose interminable carpet-work is amongst the earliest of my recollections—I could draw the pattern now—and the absence of her brother, a married man with a large family and a prosperous business, who resided constantly in London, left the fair Selina the entire mistress of her fortune, her actions, and her residence. That she remained in Belford, although exclaiming against the place and its society—its gossiping morning visits and its evening card parties, as well as the general want of refinement amongst its inhabitants, might be imputed, partly, perhaps, to habit, and an aversion to the trouble of moving, and partly to a violent friendship between herself and another damsel of the same class, a good deal younger and a great deal sillier, who lived two streets off, and whom she saw every day, and wrote to every hour.

Martha, or, as her friend chose to call her, Matilda Marshall, was the fourth or fifth daughter of a spirit-merchant in the town. Frequent meetings at the circulating library introduced the fair ladies to each other, and a congeniality of taste brought about first an acquaintance and then an intimacy, which difference of station (for Miss Savage was of the highest circle in this provincial society, and poor Martha was in no circle at all), only seemed to cement the more firmly.

The Marshalls, flattered by Selina's notice of their daughter, and not sorry that that notice had fallen on the least useful and cheerful of the family—the one that amongst all their young people they could the most easily spare, put her time and her actions entirely into her own power, or rather into that of her patroness. Mr. Marshall, a calculating man of business, finding flirtation after flirtation go off without the conclusion matrimonial, and knowing the fortune to be considerable, began to look on Matilda as the probable heiress; and except from her youngest brother William, a clever but unlucky schoolboy, who delighted in plaguing his sister and laughing at sentimental friendships, this intimacy, from which all but one member was sedulously excluded, was cherished and promoted by the whole family.

Very necessary was Miss Matilda at the Holy Brook Cottage. She filled there the important parts of listener, adviser, and confidant; and filled them with an honest and simple-hearted sincerity which the most skilful flatterer that ever lived would have failed to imitate. She read the same books, sang the same songs, talked in the same tone, walked with the same air, and wore the same fashions; which upon her, she being naturally short and stout, and dark-eyed and rosy, had, as her brother William told her, about the same effect that armour similar to Don Quixote's would have produced upon Sancho Panza.

One of her chief services in the character

of confidant was of course to listen to the several love passages of which, since she was of the age of Juliet, her friend's history might be said to have consisted. How she had remained so long unmarried might have moved some wonder, since she seemed always immersed in the passion which leads to such a conclusion: but then her love was something like the stream which flowed before her own door—a shallow brooklet, easy to slip into, and easy to slip out of. From two or three imprudent engagements her brother had extricated her; and from one, the most dangerous of all, she had been saved by her betrothed having been claimed the week before the nuptials by another wife. At the moment of which we write, however, the fair Selina seemed once more in a fair way to change her name.

That she was fond of literature of a certain class we have already intimated; and next after Sterne and Rousseau, the classics of their order, and their horde of vile imitators, whether sentimental novelists, or sentimental essayists, or sentimental dramatists, she delighted in the horde of nameless versifiers whom Gifford demolished; in other words, after reading bad prose her next favourite reading was bad verse; and as this sort of verse is quite as easy to write as to read—I should think of the two rather easier—she soon became no inconsiderable perpetrator of sonnets without rhyme, and songs without reason; and elegies, by an ingenious combination, equally deficient in both.

After writing this sort of verse, the next step is to put it in print; and in those days, (we speak of about thirty years ago) when there was no Mrs. Hemans to send grace and beauty, and purity of thought and feeling into every corner of the kingdom—no Mary Howitt to add the strength and originality of a manly mind to the charms of a womanly fancy. In those days the Poet's corner of a country newspaper was the refuge of every poetaster in the country. So intolerably bad were the acrostics, the rebuses, the epigrams, and the epitaphs which adorned those asylums for fugitive pieces, that a selection of the worst of them would really be worth printing amongst the Curiosities of Literature. A less vain person than Miss Selina Savage might have thought she did the H—shire Courant honour in sending them an elegy on the death of a favourite bull-finch, with the signature "Eugenia."

It was printed forthwith, read with ecstatic admiration by the authoress and her friend, and with great amusement by William Marshall, who, now the spruce clerk of a spruce attorney, continued to divert him himself with worming out of his simple sister all the secrets of herself and her friend, and was then unfair enough to persecute the poor girl with the most unmerciful ridicule. The elegy was printed, and in a fair way of being forgotten by all but the writer, when in the next number of the Courant appeared a complimentary sonnet, addressed to the authoress of the elegy, and signed "Orlando."

Imagine the delight of the fair Eugenia! She was not in the least astonished—a bad and inexperienced writer never is taken by surprise by any quantity of praise; but she was charmed and interested as much as woman could be.—She answered his sonnet by another, which, by the by, contained, contrary to Boileau's well-known recipe, and the practice of all nations, a quatrain too many. He replied to her rejoinder; compliments flew thicker and faster; and the poetical correspondence between Orlando and Eugenia became so tender, that the Editor of the *H—shire Courant* thought it only right to hint to the gentleman that the post-office would be a more convenient medium for his future communications.

As this intimation was accompanied by the address of the lady, it was taken in very good part; and before the publication of the next number of the provincial weekly journal, Miss Savage received the accustomed tribute of verse from Orlando, enveloped in a prose epistle, dated from a small town about thirty miles off, and signed "Henry Turner."

An answer had been earnestly requested, and an answer the lady sent; and by return of post she received a reply, to which she replied with equal alertness; then came a love-letter in full form, and then a petition for an interview; and to the first the lady answered anything but No! and to the latter she assented.

The time fixed for this important visit, it being now the merry month of May, was three o'clock in the day. He had requested to find her alone; and accordingly by one P. M., she had dismissed her faithful confidante, promising to write to her the moment Mr. Turner was gone—had given orders to admit no one but a young gentleman who sent in his visiting ticket, (such being the plan proposed by the inamorato,) and began to set herself and her apartment in order for his reception; she herself in an elegant dishabille, between sentimental and pastoral, and her room in a confusion equally elegant, of music, books, and flowers; Zimmerman and Lavater on the table; and one of those dramas—those *tragedies bourgeoises*, or *comedies larmoyantes*, which it seems incredible that Beaumarchais, he that wrote the two matchless plays of Figaro,* could have written—in her hand.

It was hardly two o'clock, full an hour before his time, when a double knock was heard at the door; Mr. Turner's card was sent in, and a well-dressed and well-looking young man ushered into the presence of the fair poetess. There is no describing such an interview. My readers must imagine the compliments and the blushes, the fine speeches *de part et d'autre*, the long words and the fine words, the sighings and the languishments. The lady was satisfied; the gentleman had no reason to complain; and

* I speak, of course, of the admirably brilliant French comedies, and not of the operas, whether English or Italian, which, retaining the situations, and hardly the situations, have completely sacrificed the wit, the character, and the pleasantry of the delightful originals, and have almost as much tended to injure Beaumarchais's reputation as his own dullest dramas.

after a short visit he left her, promising to return in the evening to take his coffee with herself and her friend.

She had just sat down to express to that friend in her accustomed high-flown language the contentment of her heart, when another knock was followed by a second visiting ticket. "Mr. Turner again! Oh! I suppose he has remembered something of consequence. Show him in."

And in came a *second* and a different Mr. Turner!!

The consternation of the lady was inexpressible! That of the gentleman, when the reason of her astonishment was explained to him, was equally vehement and flattering. He burst into eloquent threats against the impostor who had assumed his name, the wretch who had dared to trifle with such a passion, and such a lady-love; and being equally well-looking and fine-spoken, full of rapturous vows and ardent protestations, and praise, addressed equally to the woman and authoress, conveyed to the enchanted Selina the complete idea of her lover-poet.

He took leave of her at the end of half an hour, to ascertain, if possible, the delinquent who had usurped his name and his assignation, purposing to return in the evening to meet her friend; and again she was sitting down to her writing-table, to exclaim over this extraordinary adventure, and to dilate on the charms of the true Orlando, when three o'clock struck, and a third knock at the door heralded a third visiting ticket, and a *third* Mr. Turner!!!

A shy, awkward, simple youth, was this—"the real Simon Pure!"—bowing and bashful, and with a stutter that would have rendered his words unintelligible even if time had been allowed him to bring them forth. But no time was allowed him. Provoked past her patience, believing herself the laughing-stock of the town, our sentimental fair one forgot her refinement, her delicacy, her fine speaking, and her affectation; and calling her maids and her footboy to aid, drove out her unfortunate suitor with such a storm of vituperation—such a torrent of plain, honest, homely scolding—that the luckless Orlando took to his heels, and missing his footing on the narrow bridge, tumbled head foremost into the Holy Brook, and emerged dripping like a river god, to the infinite amusement of the two impostors, and of William Marshall, the contriver of the jest, who lay *perdu* in the mill, and told the story, as a great secret, to so many persons, that before the next day it was known half over the place, and was the eventual cause of depriving the good town of Belford of one of the most inoffensive and most sentimental of its inhabitants. The fair Selina decamped in a week.

—Miss Mitford.

ITINERANT OPERAS.—The first performance of the *opera seria* at Rome, in 1606, consisted of scenes in recitative and airs, exhibited in a *cart* during the carnival.

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THE BELLS OF OSTEND.

No, I never, till life and its shadows shall end,
Can forget the sweet sound of the bells of Ostend!
The day set in darkness, the wind it blew loud,
And rung as it passed through each murmuring shroud.
My forehead was wet with the foam of the spray,
My heart sigh'd in secret for those far away;
When slowly the morning advanced from the East,
The toil and the noise of the tempest had ceased:
The peal, from a land I ne'er saw, seemed to say,
"Let the stranger forget every sorrow to-day."

Yet the short-lived emotion was mingled with pain—
I thought of those eyes I should ne'er see again,
I thought of the kiss, the last kiss which I gave,
And a tear of regret fell unseen on the wave.
I thought of the schemes fond affection had planned,
Of the trees, of the towers, of my own native land.
But still the sweet sounds, as they swelled to the air,
Seemed tidings of pleasure, though mournful to bear;
And I never, till life and its shadows shall end,
Can forget the sweet sound of the bells of Ostend!

W. L. Bowles.

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND.

Ye mariners of England!
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again,
To match another foe!
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy tempests blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy tempests blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave!—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And ocean was their grave!
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy tempests blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy tempests blow.

Britannia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep,
With thunders from her native oak,
She quells the floods below,—
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy tempests blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy tempests blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return:
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors,
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

Campbell.

O, YE HOURS.

O ye hours, ye sunny hours!
Floating lightly by,
Are ye come with birds and flowers,
Odours and blue sky?
Yes, we come, again we come!
Through the wood-paths free;
Bringing many a wanderer home,
With the bird and bee.

O ye hours, ye sunny hours!
Are ye wafting song?
Doth wild music stream in showers
All the groves among?
Yes the nightingale is there,
While the starlight reigns,
Making young leaves and sweet air
Tremble with her strains.

O ye hours, ye sunny hours!
In your silent flow,
Ye are mighty, mighty powers!
Bring ye bliss or woe?

Ask not this—oh seek not this!
Yield your hearts awhile
To the soft wind's balmy kiss,
And the heaven's bright smile.
Throw not shades of anxious thought
O'er the glowing flowers!
We are come with sunshine fraught,
Question not the hours!

Mrs. Hemans.

ROW GENTLY HERE.

Row gently here,
My gondolier,
So softly wake the tide,
That not an ear,
On earth may hear,
But hers to whom we glide.
Had Heaven but tongues to speak, as well
As starry eyes to see,
Oh, think what tales 'twould have to tell
Of wandering youths like me!
Now rest thee here
My gondolier—
Hush, hush, for up I go,
To climb yon light
Balcony's height,
While thou keep'st watch below.
Oh, did we take for Heaven above
But half such pains as we
Take, day and night, for woman's love,
What angel's we should be!

Moore.

SONG.

The wreath you wove, the wreath you wove,
Is fair—but oh, how fair,
If Pity's hand had stol'n from Love
One leaf to mingle there!
If every rose with gold were tied,
Did gems for dewdrops fall,
One faded leaf where love had sigh'd
Were sweetly worth them all.
The wreath you wove, the wreath you wove,
Our emblem well may be;
Its bloom is yours, but hopeless Love
Must keep its tears for me.

Moore.

VISIT TO LEADHILLS.

Crossing the Clyde at Elvanfoot, in the upper part of Lanarkshire, we proceeded by a not very steep ascent to the village of Leadhills—the highest inhabited district in Scotland, if not in Europe—and which is beautifully situated in a shallow basin, scooped out, as it were, from the tops of a number of mountains. The extensive lead mines in the immediate neighbourhood are the great attraction, and we forthwith proceeded to make inquiries preparatory to visiting them. We found that it was necessary to ask permission to descend, from the manager of the Scots Mines Company, but that it was not necessary in visiting the works belonging to the Snar Head Company. Wishing to incur as few such obligations as possible, and especially upon hearing that a Swiss gentleman had some time ago been refused permission, we at once determined to avail ourselves of the liberality of the latter company, and accordingly engaged two experienced miners to accompany us.

Upon arriving at the entrance to one of the mines, which was about a mile distant from the village, we doffed part of our travelling dress, and equipped ourselves in miners' habiliments, including most comfortable-looking Kilmarnock cowls. Having now lighted our candles, and stuck them in a lump of clay, which answered the purpose of a candlestick exceedingly well, we proceeded to thread our way through a long passage, dark, cold and comfortless; the roof, in most places, will not admit of standing upright, while the ground, everywhere slippery, is often covered with standing water, so that considerable care is required in order to keep the happy medium between sinking up to the ancles in clay water, and knocking the cranium against the Leadhills whinstone, which will be found harder than the heads of most visitors, even when defended by a Kilmarnock nightcap. We next reached the head of the shaft—and here commenced the descent. A perpendicular gulf yawned below us, and it was sometime before we could make anything else; at length, by the assistance of our flickering light, we discovered some beams of wood crossing the shafts, and several feet farther down the top steps of a ladder. The great difficulty is to reach these, which is done by stepping on the cross beams which are placed at least two feet below one another; grasping the ladder firmly in one hand, and holding our light in the other, we slowly *felt* our way down; it is impossible to see where you are going, and the great art is never to move one foot until you have found a secure place for the other; the shaft is just wide enough to allow falling back, if so inclined; were the person at the top of the ladder to slip, he would most undoubtedly bring all the rest down with him, and anything more terrific can scarcely be imagined. However, we managed to reach the bottom without any such dire disaster; in fact the miners assured us that the darkness was our security, and that if we had attempted such a descent in daylight, giddiness would in all likelihood have prevented its accomplishment.

After traversing more passages, we arrived at the vein of ore, to procure which so much labor must have been expended. The appearance of the mine here is anything but grand and striking; in a narrow passage, about five feet in height, the wall and roof of which are formed of clay and whinstone, runs a vein of lead ore, mixed with a kind of white spar; there are no lofty roofs and mighty pillars to excite wonder and awe, no walls sparkling with the richness revealed to the eye, but there is something well worthy of wonder and admiration, and that is the skill, the industry, the perseverance of man. By what slow and tedious steps must the art of mining have attained its present excellence, and to what perfection may it yet arrive! By what reasoning could we ever have supposed that in the depths of the earth substances existed of the mightiest utility to the human race! discovered at first, perhaps, by accident, conjecture followed, experience throwing out new hints at every step, until gradually, but surely, the metals, their uses, the best methods of obtaining and preparing them, have become so familiar that we are apt to forget to be grateful for the benefits they bring. The veins vary much in thickness and richness—sometimes the ore is so pure that the light of the candle is reflected on every side. After procuring some specimens, we proceeded to the bottom of the shaft sunk at the top of the hill, from which we saw a bit of the sky, or rather a glimmering of daylight; the means of ascent here are very simple—a thick rope is attached at one end to a windlass stationed at the top of the shaft, and at the other a noose is made, in which the miner inserts his left leg, and is then drawn up, holding by the tightened rope; buckets are only used for conveying away the ore, rubbish, &c. We found large quantities of a mossy substance, something like sponge, growing even twenty fathoms below the surface, and were told that instances have been known of the beams which were used for supporting the roof, actually putting forth tender sprouts and leaves, at an equal distance from the cheering light of day!

The mines of Leadhills belong, as before-mentioned, to two companies: those worked by the Scots Mines Company are the property of the Earl of Hopetoun, and are twelve in number; only two are worked by the Snar Head Company, and they are the property of Mr. Hamilton of Gilchersleugh. The veins of ore are usually discovered at the surface, and the general procedure is to sink a perpendicular shaft in such a manner as to make it run alongside of the vein without touching it; when the shaft has reached a certain depth, a lever is cut through the side of the hill, which allows the water to run off, and then a cross passage is formed, which renders the working of the vein easier. In cutting the passages or levels, blasting is much employed, and the roof and walls are supported at first by wooden beams; working the vein seems to be a comparatively easy process, compared to getting at it, and perhaps this was not sufficiently taken

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into account by the miners, when they complained of the low rate of wages; they seem to have enough of real distress, however, but we refrain from entering on this subject at present. The lead ore, when raised from the mine, is pounded, and then subjected to a stream of water, which carries off the impurities; in this state it bears some resemblance to the small coal used by blacksmiths, but is, of course, much heavier, and not so dark in colour.

The next operation is smelting, and this is the final one performed at Leadhills; the purified ore is placed upon a furnace, which is shaped something like a writing-desk, but with a much greater level space at the top; both peat and coal are used; and after the fuel has been mixed with the ore, a blast worked by a water-wheel is employed to fan the flame; the melted lead runs down a small cut made in the inclined plane of the furnace, and is received by a trough placed at the bottom, from which it is again ladled into an iron mould, and there left to cool; when the requisite temperature is attained, the lead is taken out of the mould, and then weighs about one hundred and twelve pounds. A smelter and his assistant can turn out about twenty of these bars in a day, which will amount altogether in weight to one ton. Six hundred tons of lead, on an average, are annually produced from the mines, the greater part of which is sent to Leith, where it is either used or exported. Accidents from foul air seldom occur in these mines; in fact, any that happen are generally occasioned by the falling in of those roofs which are not properly supported; sometimes, too, even the miners lose their hold, and fall from the ladders which they are descending. There is a great deal of uncertainty in the miner's occupation: often he may realise a considerable sum, and again he may be entirely a loser. The hours of work do not exceed, in general, six a-day, and this is found quite long enough to remain under ground, for although the air cannot be called foul, it is neither dry nor wholesome.

The population of the village is upwards of 1200; of these 300 are working miners, smelters, washers and labourers; the remainder consist of women, children and those whom age has rendered incapable of labour.

The miners have always been remarkable for intelligence; this is chiefly owing to an excellent library, which was instituted in 1741—numbers about 1700 volumes. The cold air of the mountains has not extinguished the fire of genius. Allan Ramsay was a native of Leadhills, and continued to take a great interest in the prosperity of his mountain birthplace, in proof of which it may be mentioned that he presented the miners' library with a goodly number of useful volumes. The villagers possess nearly a hundred cows, which are chiefly fed on hay; this is the principal crop here, and no less than 25,000 stones are grown annually; all the ground producing this has been brought into cultivation by the miners, aided by the liberality of the Earl of Hopetoun. Potatoes are grown to some extent, and, strange to say, no taint has ever appeared here; in

consequence of this the crop is in great demand for seed, and has been sent for this purpose as far as Glasgow and Kelso. We can, in conclusion cordially recommend a visit to Leadhills; its attractions, first and last, are numerous; the drive, of itself, would amply repay all trouble; and, moreover, travellers may safely reckon on a landlord's hearty welcome from Mr. Hunter, at one of the best inns we ever had the good fortune to enter.

Dumfries and Galloway Courier.

TAKING OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY THE TURKS.*

Mahomet II., soon after he mounted the Turkish throne, resolved to achieve some glorious action, that he might surpass the fame of his predecessors; and nothing appeared so compatible with his ambition as the gaining of Constantinople, and the total subversion of the Greek empire, which at that period was in a very precarious condition. The sultan therefore made vast preparations, which the Greek emperor, Constantine VIII., perceiving, he solicited the aid of several Christian princes, especially of Pope Nicholas V. and the king of Naples; but they all, in a most unaccountable manner, excused themselves. Being thus disappointed, the emperor laid an embargo on all vessels within his ports, so that he added about three thousand veterans of different nations to the garrison of his imperial city, which before consisted of only six thousand Greeks.

In the spring of 1453, Mahomet set forward, with an army of three hundred thousand men, for Constantinople, which city, on the ninth day of April, was closely invested by land. The Turkish galleys would have done the same by sea, had not the emperor been extremely vigilant, for he caused the haven to be strongly chained from Constantinople to Pera, having within the chain his whole strength of shipping. The Turks, on the land side, erected towers, cast up trenches, and raised batteries; from these works they carried on their attacks with great fury, and made several breaches, which however the besieged repaired with much industry, at the same time repulsing their enemies with artillery. This unexpected bravery greatly enraged Mahomet, who loudly exclaimed, "It is neither the Grecians' skill nor courage, but the Franks, that defend the city." Affairs stood thus, when a renegade Christian informed the sultan how he might bring part of his fleet over land to the very haven of Constantinople. Mahomet, who began to despair of taking the city, determined to put the project of the renegade into execution; and he therefore committed the charge of it to a famous bassa, who, with wonderful labour, brought seventy vessels out of the Bosphorus, up a steep hill, the space of eight miles, to the haven of the city. The Turks, being thus miraculously possessed of the haven, assaulted the city also on that side; but their whole fleet was shamefully

* From the time of Alcibiades to the reign of Mahomet II., Constantinople has undergone twenty-four sieges.

routed, and ten thousand of their men were killed. Yet this loss, instead of depressing their spirits, increased their courage, and on the twenty-ninth of May, early in the morning, they approached the walls with greater violence than ever; but so undaunted was the resolution of the Christians, that they repulsed their assailants with prodigious slaughter for a considerable time.

Constantine, however, who had undertaken the charge of one of the city gates, unhappily received a wound in the arm; and, being obliged to retire from the scene of action, his soldiers were discouraged, forsook their stations, and fled after him, notwithstanding his earnest prayers to the contrary. In their flight they crowded so thickly together that, while endeavouring to enter a passage, above eight hundred of them were pressed to death. The ill-fated emperor likewise perished. It is needless to describe what quickly ensued—the infidels became masters of the fine city of Constantinople, whose inhabitants were all (except those who were reserved for lust) put to the sword, and the plunder, pursuant to a promise made previously by the sultan, was given up to the Turkish soldiers for three days together.—*Mirror*.

SEA AIR.—The atmosphere, in the vicinity of the sea, usually contains a portion of the muriates over which it has been wafted. It is a curious fact, but well ascertained, that the air best adapted to vegetables is pernicious to animal life, and *vice versa*. Now, upon the sea-coast, accordingly, animals thrive and vegetables decline.—*Hurwood's Southern Coast*.

QUID PRO QUO—A canon of the cathedral of Seville, who was very affected in his dress, and particular in his shoes, could not in the whole city find a workman to his liking. An unfortunate shoemaker to whom he applied, after quitting many others, having brought him a pair of shoes which did not please his taste, the canon became furious, and seizing one of the tools of the shoemaker, gave him with it so many blows on the head, that the poor shoemaker fell dead on the floor. The unhappy man left a widow, four daughters, and a son fourteen years of age, the eldest of the indigent family. They made their complaints to the chapter; the canon was prosecuted, and condemned *not to appear in the choir for a year*.

The young shoemaker, having attained to man's estate, was scarcely able to get a livelihood; and overwhelmed with wretchedness, sat down on the day of a procession at the door of the cathedral of Seville, in the moment the procession passed by. Among the other canons he perceived the murderer of his father. At the sight of this man, filial affection, rage, and despair got so far the better of his reason, that he fell furiously on the priest, and stabbed him to the heart. The young man was seized, convicted of the crime, and immediately condemned to be quartered alive. Peter, whom we call the cruel, and whom the Spaniards, with more reason, call the lover of justice, was then

at Seville. The affair came to his knowledge, and after learning the particulars, he determined to be himself the judge of the young shoemaker. When he proceeded to give judgment, he first annulled the sentence just pronounced by the clergy; and after asking the young man what profession he was, "*I forbid you,*" said he, "*to make shoes for a year to come.*"

THE ICHNEUMON FLY

There are several species of ichneumon which make thinnings among the caterpillars of the cabbage butterfly. The process of one species is this:—while the caterpillar is feeding, the ichneumon fly hovers over it, and, with its piercer, perforates the fatty part of the caterpillar's back in many places, and in each deposits an egg, by means of the two parts of the sheath uniting together, and thus forming a tube, down which the egg is conveyed into the perforation made by the piercer of the fly. The caterpillar, unconscious of what will ensue, keeps feeding on, until it changes into a chrysalis; while in that torpid state, the eggs of the ichneumon are hatched, and the interior of the body of the caterpillar serves as food for the caterpillars of the ichneumon fly. When these have fed their accustomed time, and are about to change into a pupa state, they, by an instinct given them, attack the vital part of the caterpillar (a most wonderful economy in nature, that this process should be delayed until they have no more occasion for food.) They then spin themselves minute cases within the body of the caterpillar; and instead of a butterfly coming forth (which if a female, would have probably laid six hundred eggs, thus producing as many caterpillars, whose food would be the cabbage,) a race of these little ichneumon flies issues forth, ready to perform the task assigned them, of keeping within due limits those fell destroyers of our vegetables.—*Gill's Repository*.

FACULTIES OF BRUTES.—The dog is the only animal that dreams; and he and the elephant the only animals that understand looks; the elephant is the only animal that, besides man, feels *ennui*; the dog, the only quadruped that has been brought to speak. Leibnitz bears witness to a hound in Saxony, that could speak distinctly thirty words.—*Medical Gazette*.

TRUE CONSOLATION.—A citizen of Geneva having lost his wife, he, according to the custom of the country, attended the funeral to the cemetery, which is out of the city. Somebody meeting him on his return from this painful ceremony, assumed a sorrowful countenance, and in the tenderest manner possible, asked him how he did. "Oh," replied the widower, "I am very well at present; this little walk has set me up; there is nothing like country air."

Published for the Proprietors by HENRY ROWSELL, Wellington Buildings, King Street, Toronto, by whom subscriptions will be received. Subscribers' names will also be received by A. H. Armour & Co., H. Scoble, Wesleyan Book Room, J. Leslie, Toronto; M. Mackendrick, Hamilton; J. Simpson, F. M. Whitelaw, Niagara; and by all Booksellers and Postmasters throughout the Province.

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